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ABSTRACT

Intended for parents of gifted students, the manual provides suggestions for understanding and working with the gifted child. The first section includes an overview of the nature of giftedness, talent, creativity, and intelligence; an analysis of special problems encountered by the gifted student (underachievement, cultural differences, learning difficulties); and a discussion of the rights and responsibilities of parents of gifted children. The second section is intended to offer practical ideas for parents. The first chapter offers information on home learning activities in art, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and health and physical education. Chapter 2 presents broader types of activities and parent-child interaction in reading, music, writing, science, and television viewing. Chapter 3 explores ways parents can deal with specific problems, including stress, imagination, perfectionism, and negativism. A five-page annotated bibliography is appended. (CL)

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MY CHILD IS GIFTED! NOW, WHAT DO I DO?

UNDERSTANDINGS and SUGGESTIONS for PARENTS

DONALD W. RUSSELL

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NORTH CAROLINA ASSOCIATION FOR THE gifted/talented

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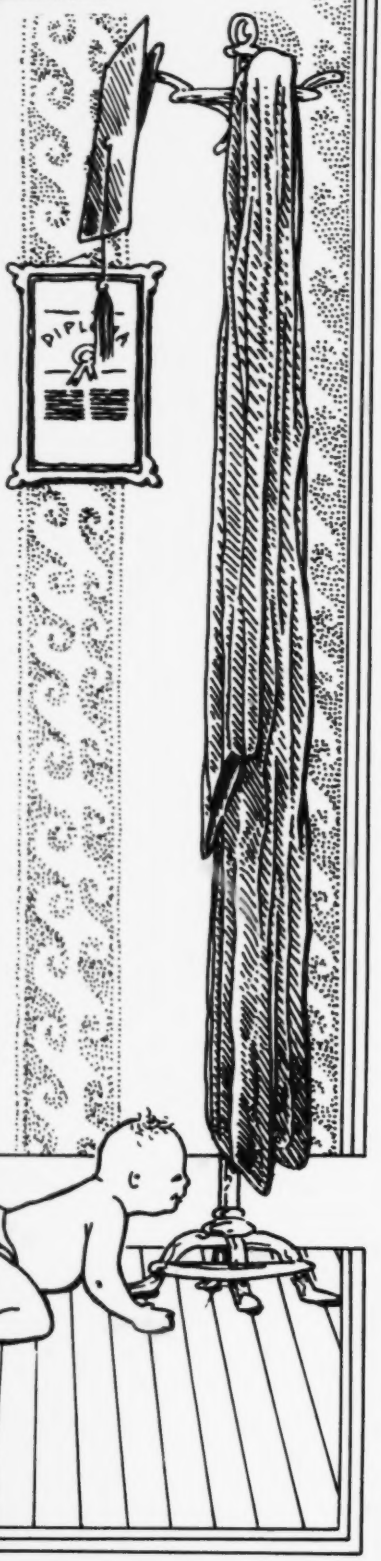

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MY CHILD IS GIFTED!
NOW WHAT DO I DO?

Understandings and Suggestions

For Parents

Donald W. Russell

Donald G. Hayes

Linda B. Dockery

Published by:

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the Gifted and Talented

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The North Carolina Association
for the Gifted and Talented

FORWORD

On behalf of the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented, I would like to extend our "thanks" to the three individuals who served as writers and editors of this, our second publication.

Dr. Don Russell, who served as editor of the NCAGT publication, Igniting Creativity and Planning For Your Gifted, currently holds the position of state PAGE Coordinator and has been instrumental in the establishment of PAGE chapters in North Carolina.

Helping parents help their gifted children has also been a lifetime concern of Dr. Don Hayes of Lenoir-Rhyne College. He is well-known throughout North Carolina for his writings and workshops on parenting.

Dr. Linda Dockery, through her experience as a teacher of the gifted and in-service worker with teachers, has long recognized the integral relationship of student-parent-teacher.

The expertise and selflessness of these three individuals have allowed us to offer this timely and insightful book of necessary understandings, suggestions and activities for all who would endeavor to work more effectively with our gifted youngsters.

Linda Weiss Morris, State President
North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to present parents with a variety of ways to study the concept of giftedness; thus to better understand and work with the gifted child.

We suggest that the book be used in one or more of the following ways:

1) As a source of study and discussion by parents in the home, including the children whenever appropriate.

2) As a source of study for a small discussion group of interested persons, such as a neighborhood coffee group or book club.

3) As a guide and resource book for an adult education course, using a parent leader, a teacher of gifted children or a trained college instructor as coordinator.

4) As basic material for a PAGE-sponsored all-day workshop or series of meetings.

Regardless of the way(s) in which the book is used, it is presented with the reminders that:

1) the uniqueness of gifted children becomes a tremendous challenge to educative agencies in general and parents in particular,

2) identifying and motivating our greatest young minds becomes a truly significant local, state and national investment.

To supplement this book, we recommend two particular sources for study and discussion:

1) Clark, Barbara, "Growing Up Gifted; Developing the Potential of Children at Home and at School." Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio, Second Edition 1983.

2) Alvino, Charles et al. "Parents' Guide to Raising a Gifted Child." Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1985.

In addition, we have included at the end of the book a practical bibliography for those who wish to study giftedness more specifically or comprehensively.

In this light, we strongly recommend the development of a centrally located Resource Center for functional materials on all aspects of the gifted child. Often this is a project undertaken by PAGE chapters and other advocacy groups. Public libraries, school libraries and various civic centers serve as appropriate locations for a Resource Center and are equipped to establish patterns of circulation of the materials.

Finally, this book is presented not as a panacea or magic formula, but as an attempt to open the door to the realm of giftedness, with all its excitement, mystery and challenge. Therefore, we encourage you to study each section carefully. Always feel free to critically evaluate, raise questions and retool the ideas and materials presented, with an eye to more effectively applying one's efforts to the understanding and nurturing of gifted children.

Acknowledgments

Many of the ideas and activities which we present in this book have arisen through the years from our work with our students and other colleagues in gifted education. To all these persons, wherever they were or are, we express our deepest thanks for their ideas and work in behalf of gifted children.

We are indebted to John Fox, Advanced Placement teacher of Art in the Winston-Salem-Forsyth County Schools, for designing the cover of the book. Deep appreciation goes to the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented for approving this project and to Linda Weiss Morris, NCAGT President 1983-85 for assisting in editing the manuscript.

Donald W. Russell
Donald G. Hayes
Linda B. Dockery

PART I

PARENT UNDERSTANDINGS and RESPONSIBILITIES

CHAPTER I

GIFTEDNESS AND THE GIFTED

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

WHAT DOES GIFTEDNESS MEAN?

If you were asked to quickly define broad concepts such as "beauty," "love," "justice" or "life," would you feel comfortable in responding (quickly)? Perhaps you feel the same way when asked what "giftedness" means.

Many parents say, "I know what giftedness is, but I can't put it into words." This generally is followed by reference to a particular child who seems to manifest gifted behaviors. This general sense of knowing is important, but being able to explain the concept and its significance is more important. There are many misconceptions of the term, all of which become deterrents to understanding and catering to the needs of children identified as gifted.

Let's study and discuss the following statement:

> "Giftedness is that precious endowment of potentially outstanding abilities, which allows a person to interact with the environment with remarkably high levels of achievement and creativity."

This statement is the product of a small neighborhood group of parents who discussed "giftedness" as a concept and thus took a very comprehensive view. They felt this was necessary before focussing on any attempt to define the gifted child. They were simply saying that within "giftedness" is a quality of inateness; or as they said, "a gift conferred by nature." Secondly, they felt that one's environment is the arena where the gifts come into play and develop. Therefore, they reasoned that the "remarkably high levels of achievement and creativity" result from a continuous and functional interaction between a person's "inherent" and "acquired" abilities and characteristics.

We often hear statements such as, "She's a born artist," or "He's a natural athlete." In like fashion we hear, "Success never came easy for me; I had to learn the hard way," or "He's a self-made man." Those who manifest "giftedness" obviously have some of the "inherent" or "inborn" factors, plus the motivation and stamina to successfully learn from and cope with the rigors of living.

We suggest that you wrestle with the term "giftedness" in your own way, looking at it as the concept which demands our investment of time, money and energy. As a result you should be able to more meaningfully discuss "giftedness" with other parents, school administrators, school board members and any citizen who needs to understand the dynamics of the term.

Having taken a quick, wide-angle look at "giftedness," it is now logical to look specifically at the child who has the gifts.

GIFTED CHILDREN - WHO ARE THEY?

Former U.S. Commissioner of Education Sidney P. Marland, Jr. in his August 1971 report to Congress stated, "Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society."

The same report continued: "Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, singly or in combination:

1. general intellectual ability
2. specific academic aptitude
3. creative or productive thinking
4. leadership ability
5. visual or performing arts
6. psychomotor ability."

This definition of the gifted child is typical of the many statements found in the professional literature and has proven to be quite adequate. Someone felt that a simpler statement would suffice and said, "Gifted children are those who do things a little earlier, a little faster, a little better, and possibly a little differently from most other children."

You should carefully analyze these and other statements, and through discussion, come up with your own definition.

Recently, a parent was heard to say that it would be so helpful if we could visually pick out gifted children from a group or class, the same way in which we pick out the tallest youngster, the one most neatly dressed, or the one with a particular mannerism or characteristic that stands out in a crowd. No such luck! It takes time and knowledge to identify the gifted. It comes through observation of overt manifestations of recognized gifted behaviors and through outstanding indications revealed by valid tests.

Unfortunately, there have been several misconceptions of the gifted child. A story is told of two 8 year old third graders who entered a local bookstore and immediately began to study several books in the science section. A clerk approached them and said, "The children's books are upstairs." "Thank you for telling us," replied one youngster, "but you see, sir, we're having this discussion with our teacher about the ways atomic fission differs from atomic fusion. We're now studying the whole area of sub-atomic particles and we need some further information on quasar and quark theories. We think one of these books may help us." Open-mouthed, the clerk turned to help another customer. Shortly, the children handed a book to the clerk, saying, "We

think this one will help us." Still amazed, the clerk took their money and wrapped the book. As the children left, he remarked to another clerk, "Wow - a couple of geniuses, but they seemed like such nice kids - not at all what you'd expect."

The clerk's astonishment indicates one misconception - that gifted children are odd, out-of-step with reality, or even a bit scarey. The old stereotype picture of the small, emaciated-looking kid with horn-rimmed spectacles, trudging through the library with an armload of books is a thing of the past. True, the gifted child is different, but different in ways we need to be fully aware of in order to motivate that child's great potential.

After all, the phenomenal post World War II push to identify giftedness arose from the frightening realization that a terrible brain-drain was taking place in our nation. The announcement in 1957 that Sputnik was in orbit triggered frenzied action to curb the obvious waste of gifted young minds. It is paradoxical that it took a crisis to bring into fruition several state and local programs for the education of gifted children.

Initially, the question of identification arose. This ignited extensive theorizing and research in order to answer several very demanding questions posed by parents and educators: What are the major characteristics of the gifted child? Can we discover the gifted through intelligence tests? Is the school the best agency to identify giftedness? Do parents know whether or not their child is gifted? Is it democratic to pay special attention to gifted children? Won't gifted children learn easily by themselves?

The research to answer these questions spread over several decades and continues today. From this research, plus the experience of many state and local programs, a great number of lists of characteristics of the gifted child have evolved. From these lists it is possible to extract the common elements and present them very generally on page 5.

If one wants to pursue in depth the characteristics of giftedness, we recommend study of pages 91-99 in Barbara Clark's informative book, "Growing Up Gifted."* Clark presents an exhaustive list of characteristics under five major headings: 1) Cognitive (thinking), 2) Affective (feeling), 3) Physical, 4) Intuitive, and 5) Societal.

Logic tells us that no one child manifests all of the attributes listed by the researchers. Nevertheless, it is significant for parents to be fully aware of the ways in which giftedness may be recognized. Many times, certain behaviors, such as constantly having unique solutions to problems, or asking endless, probing questions, or even the masterful manipulation of others, are regarded by parents as un-natural, not like other kids, and very trying to one's patience. Therefore, our recommendation is to study the characteristics of the gifted child with an open mind. Don't use the list as a score-card, which tends to let parental pride run wild. Simply discuss and appreciate the characteristics and let good, solid common-sense, coupled with love, take over.

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*Clark, Barbara, "Growing Up Gifted," (2nd Edition, 1983) Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co. Columbus, Ohio.

SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED & TALENTED CHILDREN

(These are typical factors stressed by educational authorities as being indicative of giftedness. Obviously, no child is outstanding in all characteristics.)

1) Shows superior reasoning powers and marked ability to handle ideas; can generalize readily from specific facts and can see subtle relationships; has outstanding problem-solving ability.

2) Shows persistent intellectual curiosity; asks searching questions; shows exceptional interest in the nature of man and the universe.

3) Has a wide range of interests, often of an intellectual kind; develops one or more interests to considerable depth.

4) Is markedly superior in quality and quantity of written and/or spoken vocabulary; is interested in the subtleties of words and their uses.

5) Reads avidly and absorbs books well beyond his years.

6) Learns quickly and easily and retains what is learned; recalls important details, concepts and principles; comprehends readily.

7) Shows insight into arithmetical problems that require careful reasoning and grasps mathematical concepts readily.

8) Shows creative ability or imaginative expression in such things as music, art, dance, drama; shows sensitivity and finesse in rhythm, movement and bodily control.

9) Sustains concentration for lengthy periods and shows outstanding responsibility and independence in classroom work.

10) Sets realistically high standards for himself; is self-critical in evaluating and correcting his own efforts.

11) Shows initiative and originality in intellectual work; shows flexibility in thinking and considers problems from a number of viewpoints.

12) Observes keenly and is responsive to new ideas.

13) Shows social poise and an ability to communicate with adults in a mature way.

14) Gets excitement and pleasure from intellectual challenge; shows an alert and subtle sense of humor.

A QUICK LOOK AT "INTELLIGENCE"

Earlier we stated that the attempts to define "giftedness" refer in one way or another to "inborn" attributes. This is that important endowment everyone has varying degrees of, and which for lack of a better term is called intelligence. Significant efforts have been made to measure intelligence, but due to its elusiveness, the test constructors simply aim at testing what they feel are typical manifestations of intelligence. Perhaps a little rhyme used for years by kindergarten teachers will help to describe the "elusiveness" idea.

> Nobody sees the wind; neither you, nor I. But when the trees bow down their heads, the wind is passing by.

So, we don't actually see the wind, nor can the surgeon find, operate on, or transplant intelligence. Yet we see the workings or manifestations of intelligence in the behaviors of people.

From all this, the man-made computation, I.Q. or Intelligence Quotient, has arisen. Here we probably have our best general "indicator" of intelligence, but in no way is it infallible. Unfortunately, all too often a child's I.Q. is misunderstood and becomes a life-long handle. However, the results of a standardized Intelligence test, administered by a competent examiner, give as reliable as possible an "indication" of a person's potential ability to learn and cope with life and living. So, until some scientific break-through is developed, such as a galvanomic or electronic device with an easy-to-read gauge, we rely on the I.Q. indicators as to approximately how mentally gifted a person may be.

At the risk of oversimplification, someone tried to explain the nature of intelligence in this way:

If everyone's intelligence was something you could see, touch and weigh, it would be something like a can of paint. The genius would have a gallon, the moron only half a pint. The rest of us would have varying amounts between these extremes, with the majority possessing about two quarts. This is clear enough, but it is only half the story.

Each can of paint contains the same five or six ingredients in varying amount. One can may be "long" on oil, another on pigment, a third on turpentine, the fourth on gloss or drying agent. So, although two cans contain the same amount of paint, the paint may be of vastly different consistency, color, or character.

Good painters want to know the elements in the paint with which they are working. And parents and teachers want to know the kinds of intelligence with which they are working. What are the special qualities of this intelligence? In what proportions are these elements present? And most important, what are these elements good for?

We recommend that you do not become bogged down in probing into the concept of intelligence. Its intracacies and mysteries are fascinating, but it must not become a convenient synonym for giftedness. An excellent coverage

of the concept of intelligence is provided by Barbara Clark in chapter I of "Growing Up Gifted."

Through the exciting advances in research on brain-functioning, coupled with the fact that a child's intelligence is only one key to understanding giftedness, we come to more fully realize that studying all characteristics of the gifted child is important.

A QUICK LOOK AT "CREATIVITY"

Recently a group of parents of gifted children spent several hours in a series of discussion sessions in which they courageously addressed the term "creativity." The discussion leader assigned a few background readings, but challenged the parents to think on their own and direct their thoughts to the following questions: What is creativity? How does one discover it? Is it a distinct mental process? Is it synonymous to, or an attribute of giftedness? What are the personal, social and educational implications?

The task of defining creativity immediately triggered frustration in the group and prompted several exasperating attempts to produce a written statement. The most common complaint in this task was, "I know what creativity is; I see it manifested in things my child does; I know when I'm creative; but I can't put into words exactly what it is." To relieve the tension, the discussion leader directed the parents to the following quotes:

> "Creativity is a very special condition, attitude, or state of being that nearly defies definition. Over the years, scholars and researchers, artists and musicians, and philosophers and educators have tried to use words to communicate this amazing phenomenon. Probably the most unexplainable part of creativity lies in the fact that, even though few agree on a definition, when we say the word, everyone senses a similar feeling. We may not be able to explain what it is rationally, but we know it just the same. When we are being creative, we are aware of its special excitement." (Barbara Clark)

> "After studying, experimenting, exploring, talking and writing for many years about the implications of creativity for the gifted, it would seem that I should be able to set forth these implications clearly and neatly. . . . Now, I find the task an impossible one. . . . Creativity is something infinite and its possibilities can never be exhausted." (Paul Torrance)

The parents agreed that they "sensed" creativity (whatever it is) and that the whole experience of attempting to make the term tangible had caused them to realize that there is, what they called, a "beautiful mystery about it," placing it in the category of other near-undefinable terms like "beauty," "life" and "love." There was agreement also that certain key words helped in both recognizing creativity and attempting to explain it. Originality, inventiveness, innovation, spontaneity, imagination, divergency, etc. were used consciously and unconsciously over and over again.

The group tried diligently to determine if there is a distinct process of creativity, but finally agreed that certain steps stated by researchers in the field were quite plausible, yet open to several variables. They agreed that there had to be a starting point -- an idea, a question, an experience, or something consciously or unconsciously learned. Then comes a period of study, imagination, and experimentation which may or may not be productive. Next, the group agreed that generally there follows a period of waiting -- possibly a distinct turning away from the problem -- knowing that the subconscious mind will not blot out the whole idea. The researchers call this the "incubation" period. Finally, they agreed that creativity manifests itself in a mysterious "bubbling to the surface" manner -- maybe exploding -- thus presenting an answer or a partial solution. They chose to call this the "Eureka" stage. The various emotional reactions to this stage were described as "surprise accompanied by joy," "near-disbelief accompanied by appreciation," and feelings of "How did I do that?" "I don't believe that came out of me!" :Why didn't I think of that earlier?" "Could this be supernatural?"

The reason for describing the learning experiences of this parent discussion group is to pose the challenge to individuals or groups to attempt the same type of study. It is the same procedure we strongly recommended for parents to follow in analyzing "giftedness" and "the gifted child."

In any such study, dangerous generalizations evolve. For example, all too often a person may refer to the creative child as the child with artistic talents -- the one who demonstrates high skill in one or more of the performing arts. This obviously does not automatically exemplify creativity, because within the high performing skill there may well be a lack of originality, inventiveness or spontaneity.

Naturally, the question arises -- is creativity synonymous with high intelligence or giftedness? In most lists of characteristics of giftedness a statement is made that the gifted person often is an original thinker and thus creative. This very well can be a distinct tendency, but it cannot be guaranteed. J. P. Guilford stated that we must look well beyond the boundaries of the I.Q. if we are to fathom the domain of creativity. So, if we attempt to generalize and say that a highly intelligent person is also a highly creative person, we find that such is not necessarily so. However, we can imply that because a gifted person has a high level of mental endowment, there is probably more of a likelihood that that person has the potential of being creative.

Finally, the parent discussion group, referred to earlier, agreed that from their extensive reading, a statement made by Loren Eiseley in his book "The Night Country" explained "creativity" in a manner which most poetically conveyed the mysterious dynamics of the term. We present it here and suggest you read it carefully several times to catch its spirit and significant implications.

> The creative element in the mind of man -- that latency which can conceive gods, carve statues, move the heart with the symbols of great poetry, or devise the formulas of modern physics -- emerges in as mysterious a fashion as those elementary particles which leap into momentary existence in great cyclotrons, only to vanish again like infinitesimal ghosts. The reality we know in our limited lifetimes is dwarfed by the unseen potential of the abyss where science stops.

In a similar way the smaller universe of the individual human brain has its lonely cometary passages or flares suddenly like a supernova, only to subside in death while the waves of energy it has released roll on through unnumbered generations.

As the astrophysicist gazes upon the rare releases of power capable of devastating an entire solar system, so does the student of the behavioral sciences wonder at the manifestations of creative genius and consider whether the dark mechanisms that control the doorways of the human mind might be trapped open at more frequent intervals. Does genius emerge from the genes alone? Does the largely unknown chemistry of the brain contain at least part of the secret? Or is the number of potential cell connections involved? Or do we ordinary men carry it irretrievably locked within our subconscious minds?

The psychiatrist Lawrence Kubie has speculated that "the creative person is one who in some manner, which today is accidental, has retained his capacity to use his pre-conscious functions more freely than is true of others who may potentially be equally gifted." While I do not believe that the time will ever come when each man can release his own Shakespeare, I do not doubt that the freedom to create is somehow linked with the facility of access to those obscure regions below the conscious mind.

(From "The Night Country" by Loren Eiseley)

Finally, in a lighter vein, parents must become familiar with certain signals of creativity so it can be recognized and encouraged when it appears. Here is a list of typical behaviors which become signals of creativity:

- Intense absorption in listening, observing or doing ("But I didn't hear you call me for dinner!")
- Intense animation and physical involvement ("But I can't sit still - I'm thinking.")
- Use of analogies in speech ("I feel like a caterpillar waiting to become a butterfly.")
- Tendency to challenge ideas of authorities ("Why do I have to go to school until I'm 16?")
- Habit of checking many sources ("Mom, I looked at all the books and watched a TV special and asked my teacher and I still can't figure out where God lives.")
- Taking a close look at things ("Hey, this centipede only has 99 legs!")
- Eagerness to tell others about discoveries ("Guess what, guess what, guess what!")

- Continuing in creative activities after the scheduled time for quitting ("I did my art work right through recess today!")

- Showing relationships among apparently unrelated ideas ("Hey Mom, your new hat looks just like a flying saucer.")

- Following through on ideas set in motion ("Tomorrow I'm going to dig for gold in our back yard.")

- Various manifestations of curiosity and wanting to know ("I just wanted to see what the yard looked like from on top of the roof.")

- Spontaneous use of discovery or experimental approach ("I thought flour and water make bread, but all I got was white goo.")

- Honesty and intense search for truth ("Mom, I hope this doesn't upset you, but I've come to the conclusion that there is no Tooth Fairy.")

- Independent action ("There are no good books on racing cars, Mom, I'm going to write my own.")

- Boldness of ideas ("But I think that children should be allowed to vote.")

- Low distractability ("I can't come out to play - I'm waiting for my chemicals to dissolve.")

- Manipulation of ideas and objects to obtain new combinations ("I'm going to take this string and this pencil and make a compass.")

- Penetrating observations and questions ("When the snow melts, where does the white go?")

- Tendency to seek alternatives and explore new possibilities ("This old shoe would make a great flower pot.")

- Self initiated learning ("Yesterday I went to the library and checked out all books on dinosaurs.")

- Willingness to consider or toy with strange ideas ("What if dogs were masters and people were pets?")

- Excitement in voice about discoveries ("Flour and water make paste!")

- Habit of guessing and testing outcomes ("I put detergent in the birdbath but no birds came to clean up. Can I try some bubble bath today?")

For a succinct and authoritative analysis of creativity, we recommend careful study of pages 30-50 in Barbara Clark's book "Growing Up Gifted." Also in a later section we have presented some practical approaches to creativity with gifted children.

THE GIFTED CHILD IS CALLED MANY THINGS

Very often parents become understandably confused by the many terms used in referring to the gifted child. Genius, talented, prodigy, precocious, exceptional, superior, high I.Q., rapid learner, etc. are only a few of the terms. "Bright" has been, and will continue to be about as oft-used term as any, however, many people prefer to up the candlepower and say "Brilliant." So, parents hear these terms used -- sometimes adopting them in their own conversations -- without knowing if the terms are synonymous with "gifted," or just adjectives or nouns which help to explain the concept.

"Genius" used to be widely used, but now is reserved for reference only to the phenomenally gifted person. In a light vein, someone stated that "genius" denotes that which every parent has at least one of.

"Talented" tends to be used when referring to a particular strength or ability of a person. Thought should be given as to whether that "talent" is truly a gift, or is it rather an ability, which through practice has become a highly developed skill. It is safe to say that generally the identified gifted person is the person with multiple talents of a rather high order.

The terms "prodigy" and "precocious" most commonly arise when a decidedly advanced degree of skill in a particular endeavor is evidenced by a child at a very early age, and who in many instances has been subjected to a very disciplined type of motivation. It is interesting to note that the derivation of the word "precocious" or "precocity" comes from the ancient Greek language and means "precooked." It's sort of an early ripening idea, and naturally the parent has a ring-side seat to the early indications.

"Superior" is a relative term implying a comparative picture. When a child is classified "superior," we would like to know to what, whom, or what group he/she is superior. The professional literature often indicates degrees of superiority, such as "highly superior," "moderately superior" as differentiated from just plain superior, whatever that may be. A child may be markedly superior to the majority of children in a specific mental ability such as verbal comprehension, and at the same time be equally inferior in the area of spatial relations or memory. The looseness of the term limits its usage in most cases to broad generalization.

A "high I.Q. may be anything, depending on what it is higher than. On this point, we refer to our quick look at "intelligence" on page 5.

"Rapid learner" tends to be a helpful term in understanding giftedness, since it is a distinct characteristic manifested by the identified gifted child. It also is a convenient antonym to "slow learner."

The term "exceptional" is appropriate when referring to the gifted child as different in the ways we have mentioned earlier. Parents of mentally handicapped children, or any other area of exceptionality have equal rights to the term. Thus, "exceptional in what ways?" is the logical demand for explanation.

At this point it is necessary to bring into focus a term which continues to be tossed around altogether too loosely in reference to education of the gifted.

That term is "elitism." It has become vogue for the most vocal critics to cry "elitism" in the same manner the referee calls "foul." Much of this stems from the traditional "sour grapes" attitude or jealousy, and in some instances, ignorance.

By derivation "elite" means the choice or best or superior part of a body or class of persons. However, time and an over-emphasis on egalitarianism has produced a negative connotation of "elite," which implies snobbishness, selectivity and unfair special attention.

Paradoxically, a major premise of the concept of "democracy" is that is is a way of life in which people should recognize and be glad that some people are better or superior in one way or another -- a distinct necessity for local, state and national productivity and development.

So, gifted children justifiably and positively are elite in the same way that anyone becomes a champion, a record-holder, a soloist, an inventor or a leader in important realms of human endeavor. Therefore, parents of gifted children have a distinct responsibility to challenge those who cry "elitism," and to explain the true meaning of the term.

The only reason for mentioning these terms -- and there are many more -- is to caution parents that semantics and language usage can be tricky and confusing. Thus, your personal understanding and application of the term "gifted" becomes doubly important.

Finally, why do we feel it so necessary to thoroughly understand giftedness and the characteristics of gifted children? The answer is simple and direct and is spelled out by the reminders stated in the Preface of this book and accentuated in all the attempts to define the gifted. Commissioner Marland's statement justifies it all: "These are children who require differential educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contributions to self and society."

A TEST

Having skimmed the surface of "giftedness as a concept and the general characteristics of the gifted child, test yourself as to your understanding and ability to effectively respond to the following situations and questions. What would you do and say?

1) One of your neighbors, whose child has been identified as gifted by the school, asks you, "Just what does gifted mean anyway?

2) You've heard someone say, "It's downright undemocratic to have special programs for the bright kids. They'll succeed and achieve anyway."

3) You learn that two members of the local board of education are openly hostile to the program for gifted children in your school.

4) You have been asked by a neighborhood group of parents to lead a two hour discussion session on the topic "Who is a Gifted Child?"

5) Your child says to you, "What makes you think I'm gifted?"

6) If you feel one of your children is much more intelligent than the second or third child, what do you really mean?

CHAPTER II

SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF THE GIFTED

Parents of gifted children are well aware that giftedness in no way assures freedom from problems. It is difficult to present a finite list of these problems since the inherent and acquired attributes of gifted children vary widely. It is even more difficult to recommend the most functional procedures to remedy problem situations.

At this point, a word of caution to parents is in order. The term "problem" tends to be relative, elusive and sometimes overworked. Therefore, it is wise to ask, "Does my gifted child really have a problem?" Due to the closeness of the parent to the child's involvement in growing up, what often may seem like a problem is merely a dilemma of short duration, a let-down in parental expectation, or an interruptive element in a child's adjustment to the intricacies of living. Therefore, it is recommended that before a situation is judged as a problem, the parent should make a very careful and honest analysis of all aspects of that situation. Some of the materials in a later section of this book can be of help when used either in family conferences, group sessions among parents, or effectively directed study of specific problem areas.

A group of experienced teachers of gifted children approached the topic "Special Problems of the Gifted," and their analysis of some key problem areas is appropriate here, particularly since these teachers are on the "firing-line," constantly working with gifted children and their parents. Their introductory statement becomes sage advice to parents and is followed by some very insightful information:

There is a common notion that gifted children have fewer problems than others because their intelligence and talents somehow exempt them from the hassles of daily life. According to this belief, children with a greater number of abilities are assumed to have a greater number of coping mechanisms and therefore they can "make it on their own." As parents of gifted children know, however, this theory is simply not true. Research has shown that gifted children are susceptible to many everyday problems, ranging in complexity from not being able to find clean socks to dealing with the rising cost of living and that like other groups with special needs they have some problems that are uniquely their own.

UNDERACHIEVEMENT

Underachievement -- that is, performance below one's potential -- is perhaps one of the most widely discussed problems of the gifted. There are many signs and symptoms of underachievement and many different causes; therefore, it would be an impossible task to attempt one statement that would apply to all cases.

It is known that underachievement is related to what a child thinks about himself as a learner, as a child, as a person. Self concept is developed in many ways but is usually directly linked to a child's reactions to his parents

and other significant adults in his life. When a child has a positive self concept, it means that he feels good about himself and the way he believes other people see him. A poor self concept, on the other hand, means that a child feels poorly about himself and that he does not like the way he thinks other people see him. Usually a child reacts to the latter situation with some hostility, which can, and often does, show up in his school work, especially if his family sets overly rigid expectations and rules about high test scores and good grades. This is not to say that a child actually plans not to achieve, but that his poor performance is a sign of resistance stemming from his anger at the situation. In these cases, finding out and trying to remedy the causes of his poor self concept would be one of the best methods for treating the problem.

It is not always easy to discover an underachieving child's real feelings about himself because there usually is a gap between what he says and what he feels. An underachiever may adopt a "What's the use?" attitude to avoid unpleasant confrontations with his problems.

Since there is no one cause for the problem of underachievement, neither is there any one treatment. It is important to remember that an underachiever is a child who has lost faith in himself. Any opportunity for him to learn new skills or improve his abilities should be encouraged. This does not mean simply praising a child, because praise is not enough. If Johnny feels that he cannot draw well, a vague compliment like "Oh, you draw so well" will not make him feel better about his drawing ability because the gap in opinions seems too wide. Recognition of a small piece of his work -- "I like the way you drew the house" or "You are really improving" -- would seem to Johnny a much more realistic possibility. In other areas, such as helping around the house, a step by step plan for recognition is also useful. Little successes, like setting the table nicely or keeping a neat room for a day, are much more meaningful to the underachiever than sweeping compliments and have a greater and longer lasting effect.

THE CULTURALLY DIFFERENT

Another category of problems of gifted children is that of cultural difference. Culturally different children are those whose family backgrounds are removed from the American White middle class stereotype. This category can include various ethnicities such as Black, Appalachian rural, Spanish speaking, American Indian, or groups which have little access to resources because of financial or geographic limitations. Children of culturally different families generally have a different set of life experiences from those of the culturally dominant majority and have different opportunities for the expression of their talents.

It is important for parents to recognize the values and abilities that are prized by their culture and to identify their children's potential accordingly.

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

A third problem that parents should understand is that of learning difficulties among gifted children. This situation is one that frustrates parents,

teachers, and children alike because it is hard to comprehend how a child can be so outstanding at some things but have such trouble with others. In school this problem may be seen as a lowered performance in a specific subject such as reading or math, while at home it might be indicated by a short attention span, easy distractability, temper flare-ups, or overactivity.

In cases of specific learning difficulties, it may seem that the gifted child is controlling and choosing the things he will or will not do. At the same time, it may appear that he is unwilling to change bad habits. Learning difficulties, however, are not determined by the child himself but by a variety of circumstances ranging from poor teaching to the child's lack of interest in a subject to a real disability that needs educational or medical treatment. Especially in the latter situation, it is essential for parents and children to understand and accept that even the most gifted individual cannot excel in all areas of performance. If too much pressure is put on the child to do what he simply cannot, emotional upsets might occur and make the problem more difficult.

There are, of course, other problems that arise with gifted children on a day to day basis, many of which should be handled by parents in the same way that they would handle the problems of any child. In some instances, counseling may be indicated for the child and for the whole family. In many cases, both comfort and practical suggestions may be derived from talking with other parents of gifted children. Some of the particular problems of the gifted have been successfully managed by individual families who are eager to discuss their findings.

The three general problem areas discussed here by the experienced teachers tend to be most typical. However, the teachers wisely indicate that day to day problems arise, which are ideosyncratic to the particular child, school, region, or any other contributing factor.

It should be noted that federal and state governments have legislated in behalf of "disadvantaged" children, which may or may not relate to the "culturally different". Our point here is that gifted children may be discovered at all socio-economic levels, all of which makes the identification process doubly significant in order to guarantee that no gifted child will be overlooked.

Finally, school systems are trying to cope with the problem of what can be called the "handicapped gifted" child. This is the child who because of a specific impairment (visual, hearing, orthopedic, emotional, health, or specific learning disability, etc.) is identified and assigned to the appropriate services for that impairment, but who also is identified as gifted. Such situations pose double responsibility on the school and the parents of such children. Once again, the investment in giftedness is a must for the same reason that the impairment requires treatment or remediation.

In Part II, Chapter III, we include information relative to several specific problems faced by gifted children which require special parental skills to resolve. Several suggestions and challenges to parents are presented.

CHAPTER III

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS OF GIFTED CHILDREN

All too often we find that parents are not fully aware of their rights relative to the identification and delivery of services to gifted children. Thus, knowledge of and strong advocacy for these rights become major responsibilities. Earlier we referred to the national "brain-drain" which awakened political and educational leaders across the nation to the need to more effectively find, serve, and thus invest in our greatest young minds. The responsibility for the perpetuation and further development of this investment must be a collective endeavor in which parents put forth every effort.

We are thankful that in this nation we have rights as citizens with which few if any other countries can compare. In relation to education, every person has the right to free, publicly supported schools. The implementation of this philosophy has had its ups and downs in our relatively short history, but essentially each child has the right to an education geared to his/her potential abilities. The phenomenally broad range of potential abilities constantly challenges educators to provide equal and appropriate services for <u>all</u> children.

It is here that the term "exceptional" comes into play, meaning that the abilities of certain students require special effort due to certain exceptional factors. For decades the term "Special Education" was applied to the needs of exceptional children, and this prompted the legitimate question "Shouldn't all education be special for all children?" Simply because human beings differ widely in their growth and learning abilities, "Education for Children with Special Needs" comes forth with a more logical ring than just "Special Education." Children with various types of handicaps make the delivery of educational services necessarily different. In like manner, children with outstanding mental abilities necessitate different and often unique educational planning and delivery services.

You will recall that all the definitions of a gifted child stated that such a child requires differential education which generally goes beyond that provided in the regular school program. So, herein lies the parental <u>right</u> as well as the distinct <u>responsibility</u> to advocate and insist on this differential approach to giftedness.

The significance of this point has manifested itself through legislative mandates established in several states. This movement developed from the enactment in 1975 of Public Law 94-142 which stated that all handicapped children would be carefully identified and appropriate services provided. Several states, including North Carolina, reasoned that gifted children also need "appropriate" services and therefore mandated that such children will be identified and their needs met.

To explain the history and present status of the legal rights of parents of gifted children in North Carolina, we are presenting the following information* which parents should carefully study and discuss. Within the material you will find the state approved criteria and procedures for the identification of academically gifted children (Section E). This information is presented in

detail and thus becomes a summary of the laws governing the rights of parents of children with special needs. In North Carolina the law covers children who are autistic, academically gifted, hearing impaired, other health impaired, pregnant, behaviorally/emotionally handicapped, specific learning disabled, speech and/or language impaired, and visually impaired. So, herein we see the very comprehensive legal coverage of all "exceptional" children, noting of course for our purposes, the inclusion of gifted children.

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*The following information is taken from "Handbook on Parent Rights," published by the Division for Exceptional Children, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

In 1977, the General Assembly of North Carolina passed "An Act to Provide for a System of Educational Opportunities for all Children Requiring Special Education," (commonly known as the Creech Bill and now referred to as "Article 9"). This law was modeled on the federal law, P.L. 94-142, "The Education of All Handicapped Children Act of 1975."

The following factors are mandated or provided for in the laws:

- All children with special needs ages 5 through 18 must be provided a free, appropriate public education.
- Special-needs children must receive this education at no cost to their parents.
- Each child must receive an education designed to meet the child's own needs.
- Parents must be allowed to participate in educational decisions affecting their children.
- Parents must give consent prior to initial evaluation and placement.
- The child must be evaluated with tests or instruments which do not discriminate because of his/her special needs.
- Parents may see all of the education records for their child. The parents must give permission for school records to be shared with anyone not involved in the education of the child.
- Each child with special needs should be placed in a program as much like the regular class as possible. Some children with special needs may be able to stay in the regular class with special education resources, but others may need a special class or a special school.
- Children will normally be served within the public school system. Sometimes it may be necessary for the school system to place a child in a private school, another school system, or some other approved program in order to meet the child's needs.

- Parents may object to the evaluation, placement recommendation or the provision of a free appropriate public education for the child through a due process hearing.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A PARENT

The parent of a child receiving special education or being considered for special education is guaranteed certain procedural safeguards under state and federal laws which relate to pupil referral, evaluation, program planning, placement, review and appeals.

Referrals

When any person or agency suspects that a child may need special education services, that person or agency should provide the appropriate school personnel with the reason, in writing, for referring the child for diagnosis and evaluation. The referral should include the child's specific problem and the child's current strengths and weaknesses. If the child is enrolled in a public school, the referral should be given to the child's teacher or principal. If the child is not enrolled in a public school, the referral should be given to the coordinator of the Academically Gifted Program or Director of Programs for Exceptional Children.

Evaluation Procedures

After a child has been referred to determine his/her need for special education services, an evaluation process must be followed. The following specific procedures protect the rights of students and their parents:

A. Written prior notice of their rights must be given to parents in the language they best understand. The parents must give written permission before the first individual evaluations are begun.

B. Testing and evaluation materials must be selected and administered so as not to be racially or culturally biased.

C. Before any action is taken in the initial placement of a child in a special education program, a full evaluation must be conducted.

D. The school unit must comply with the following six requirements in its evaluation procedures:

   1. The tests must be:

      a. administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication.

      b. validated for the specific purpose for which they are used for example, achievement tests may not be used to measure intellectual ability.

2. The selected tests and other evaluation materials must include those designed to measure specific areas of educational need and not merely those designed to provide a single general measure of intelligence.

3. The tests must allow for impaired vision, hearing, manual or speaking skills (so these impairments do not lower test scores).

4. The evaluation must be performed by trained specialists with knowledge in the area of the child's suspected disability or special need.

5. The child must be evaluated in all areas related to the suspected disability or special need as required in the State Board book, Rules Governing Programs and Services for Children with Special Needs.

6. One test or procedure is not enough to determine the educational program a child might need.

E. Identification as Academically Gifted is based on an assessment of intelligence or aptitude test scores, standardized achievement test scores and student performance based on grades, demonstrated skills or products. Students earning 98 or more points on I.Q./aptitude and achievement percentiles or on I.Q./aptitude and achievement percentiles plus scholastic performance are eligible to be considered for the Academically Gifted Program.

POINTS

Percentile	I.Q.	Achievement	Grades	Points
99	50	50	A	10
98	49	49	B/A	9
97	48	48	B	8
96	47	47	C/B	7
95	46	46	C	6
94	45	45		
93	44	44		
92	43	43		
91	42	42		
90	41	41		
89	40	40		
88	39	39		
87	38	38		
86	37	37		
85	36	36		

etc.

Rules, .1509, (c)

F. A re-evaluation of a child with special needs must be conducted at least once every three years, or more frequently, if necessary.

Independent Evaluation

If the parents feel that the evaluation is not adequate to determine the child's special needs, they have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. This evaluation must be given by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school system responsible for the child's education.

The following parental rights concerning evaluation procedures are related to obtaining an independent educational evaluation:

A. Parents have the right to be given, on request, information about where an independent educational evaluation may be obtained. This request should be sent to the coordinator of the Academically Gifted Program, or Director of Programs for Exceptional Children.

B. Parents have the right to be told about the requirements used for selecting a qualified examiner. The requirements for an independent educational evaluation will be the same as those used by the school system. These requirements may be obtained from the coordinator of the Academically Gifted Program or Director of Programs for Exceptional Children.

C. The independent educational evaluation will be provided at no cost to the parents if it is agreed by the parents and the school system that the existing evaluation is not appropriate. However, the school system may initiate an impartial due process hearing to show that its evaluation is appropriate. If the final decision determines that the evaluation is appropriate, the parents still have the right to an independent educational evaluation. However, such an evaluation would not be provided at public expense. The results from the independent educational evaluation, as well as other test results maintained by the school system, will be considered in special education decisions regarding the child.

D. An impartial hearing officer may initiate the order for an independent educational evaluation at public expense or may grant a parent's request for such evaluation at public expense during the course of a due process hearing.

E. Parents should not obtain an evaluation for their child and expect the public school system to pay for it unless they have received written approval from the coordinator of the Academically Gifted Program or Director of Programs for Exceptional Children.

Group Education Program (GEP)

A Group Education Program (GEP) is used to describe an instructional program that is appropriately differentiated for a group of two or more academically gifted students. The Group Education Program should be in place at the time services are initiated and reviewed at least annually to aid in recommendation for the next year's placement and program.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the Group Education process through written correspondence, group meetings or individual conferences.

A. The GEP should include the following components:

   1. a brief narrative describing the program content:

   2. annual goals;

   3. methods and procedures for determining that goals have been met.

B. An individualized component is added for those students whose special needs are not adequately addressed by the GEP. This could include the need for related services.

Least Restrictive Environment

To the maximum extent appropriate, the special-needs child must participate with children who have not been identified as having special needs in non-academic, academic and extracurricular activities such as meals, recess, counseling, athletics, special interest groups and clubs. Special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of special needs children from the regular educational environment should occur only when the nature or severity of the special need is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. In applying the least restrictive environment principle, decisions must be made on the basis of the individual child's educational needs.

The federal and state laws require school systems to provide for a continuum of alternative placements, including:

1. regular classes;

2. regular classes with supportive services;

3. special classes;

4. special day schools;

5. residential placement.

Placement

Placement is the end product of referral, identification, and evaluation. The school system must insure that:

1. the placement is based on the child's eligibility;

2. placement is as close as possible to his or her home. Unless a program option is needed beyond that offered in the base school, the child will be educated in his/her base school;

3. placement is reviewed and determined at least annually.

Prior Notice

Federal and state laws require that a very specific type of written notice be given to the parents of a child with special needs prior to the time that the school system proposes to initiate or change, or refuses to initiate or change, the identification, evaluation, or placement of a child or the provision of a free appropriate public education for the child.

A. The prior notice must include a full explanation of all of the procedural safeguards available to the parents under federal and state laws. Specific content includes the following:

   1. a description of the action proposed or refused by the school system;

   2. an explanation of why the school system proposed or refused to take the action;

   3. a description of any options the school system considered and the reasons why those options were rejected;

   4. a description of each evaluation procedure, test, record or report the school system will use as a basis for the proposal or refusal; and/or

   5. a description of any other factors which are relevant to the school system's proposal or refusal.

B. The prior notice must be written.

C. The notice must be written in language understandable to the general public.

D. The notice must be given in the parents' native language or other mode of communication used by the parents.

Access to Student Records and Confidentiality of Information

A. The school system must permit parents to inspect and review any educational records relating to their child. The school system should respond without unnecessary delay, and in no case more than 45 days after the request has been made. A prompt response is required when records are needed prior to any meeting relating to the child's identification, evaluation, or placement, or to the provision of a free appropriate public education for the child.

B. The school system must respond to a reasonable request for explanation and interpretation of the records, and must provide, upon request, a list of the types and locations of records maintained.

C. The school system must provide copies of the records if failure to provide those records would effectively prevent the parents from exercising the right to review and inspect those records.

D. The parents have the right to restrict access to their child's records by withholding consent to disclose records.

E. The parents have the right to be told with whom information has been shared.

F. The parents have the right to be informed before information in the child's file is to be destroyed.

G. If a parent believes that information in the record is inaccurate, misleading or violates the child's privacy or other rights, he or she may request that the school system amend the record. If the school system decides not to amend the record, it must inform the parent of the refusal within a reasonable time after the initial request. The school system must advise the parent of the right to an impartial due process hearing.

H. If, as a result of the hearing, the system's refusal to amend the record is upheld, then the parents must be informed of their right to place a statement in the records commenting on the information or explaining their disagreement with the school system.

I. Parents have the right to request that records pertaining to the identification, placement and special educational programming of children with special needs be destroyed if no longer needed to provide educational services to the child.

Consent

A. Parental consent must be obtained by the school system before an initial preplacement evaluation is conducted.

B. Parental consent must also be obtained by the school system before a child is initially placed in special education.

C. If a parent refuses to consent, the school system may initiate an impartial due process hearing to determine if the child should be initially evaluated or initially placed. The parents have the right to protest the proposed action at the hearing.

D. If the hearing officer upholds the school system, the school system may evaluate or initially provide special education or related services to the child without the parents' consent. The parents still have the right to appeal to the state education agency and, ultimately, to go into court.

Mediation

If the parents and the school system cannot agree on the identification, evaluation, program, or placement of the child, then a third party could be invited to mediate. Mediation is not a procedure required by law, but it is one attempt to resolve the issue(s) rather than going to a formal hearing by an impartial hearing officer. If a resolution that is satisfactory to both parties can be reached through mediation, much time and expense to both parties of the formal hearing process, including possible appeal of the hearing decision, can be avoided. Mediation, however, cannot be used by either party merely to delay a formal due process hearing or other legal procedure.

Impartial Due Process Hearing and State Review

A parent or the school system may request an impartial due process hearing to challenge the identification, evaluation, or placement of a child, or provision of a free appropriate public education for the child.

A. The parents must send a written request for a hearing to the local school superintendent within 30 days after receiving notice of the school system's proposed action.

B. The school system will inform parents of free or low-cost legal services.

C. The hearing must be conducted by a person who is not employed by the public agency involved in the education of the child and who has no professional or personal interest in the hearing.

D. The parents have the right to see a statement of the qualifications of the impartial hearing officer.

E. The parents have the right to be accompanied to the hearing and to be advised by counsel and individuals with special knowledge or training in problems of children with special needs.

F. The parents have the right to have their children present.

G. The parents have the right to request that the hearing be open to the public.

H. The parents and the school system have the right to present evidence and confront, cross-examine and compel the attendance of witnesses.

I. The parents and the school system have the right to prohibit the introduction of any evidence at the hearing that has not been disclosed to them at least five days before the hearing.

J. The parents have the right to obtain written findings of fact and a written decision within 45 days after the school system received the initial request for the hearing.

K. The parents and the school system have the right, within 30 days after receiving the written decision, to appeal the findings of the local hearing officer to the state education agency and to receive a decision within 30 days of the filing of an appeal.

L. The parents have the right to request such a state review set at a time reasonably convenient to them if additional evidence is deemed necessary to make a final determination of the matter.

M. The parties have the right to appeal a decision from the state education agency into court within 30 days after notice of the decision.

N. The parents have the right to request that the child remain in his/her present educational placement during the time of the due process hearing, unless the parents and the school system agree otherwise.

THE RIGHTS OF SURROGATE PARENTS

Under federal and state laws, the school system has the responsibility to appoint a surrogate parent for a child with special needs under the following circumstances:

A. when no parent can be identified;

B. when the school system, after making reasonable efforts, cannot discover the whereabouts of a parent; or

C. when the special-needs child is a ward of the state.

A surrogate parent represents the interests of the child with special needs in all matters relating to his/her identification, evaluation, educational placement, and the provision of a free appropriate public education. Surrogate parents have the same rights of parents as described in this handbook.

A MAJOR PARENT RESPONSIBILITY - ADVOCACY

Having discussed the rights and responsibilities of parents of gifted children, it is important to re-emphasize the significance of parent "advocacy" for the most appropriate services to gifted children. Perhaps part of the problem of understanding advocacy by the parent advocate lies in the term itself. "Advocate" originates from the Latin word for legal counselor. It means one who pleads in favor of, supports by argument, defends or vindicates. Thus, we consciously and sometimes unconsciously become advocates of the things in which we truly believe and want to see develop and improve.

To best explain the concept of advocacy, along with some of the pitfalls facing the advocate of gifted education, we present the sage advice of Patricia Mitchell, editor of "An Advocate's Guide to Building Support for Gifted and Talented Education."

> "As you become an advocate for improved programs for gifted and talented children you will find yourself drawing on skills from a variety of professions. For example:
>
> The calm, reassuring "bedside manner" of a physician will be helpful in soothing the many people who are afraid that programs for the gifted and talented will hurt their budgets, or their school's democratic image, or the feelings of those children who are not placed in the program;
>
> The negotiating abilities of a diplomat will help in resolving the disagreements that are likely to occur among fellow advocates over the who-what-and-how issues of organizing and carrying out a push for better programs;
>
> The smooth persuasion of a used car salesperson or a trial attorney will be invaluable as you convince others to buy your idea and to deliver necessary funding and program support;
>
> The stamina and the cool-headedness required of a firefighter are vital. Many times it will be all you can do to hang on, and help yourself and others fighting so the whole effort does not go up in smoke.
>
> As with regular jobs, advocacy for the gifted and talented is not without its occupational hazards. The greatest risk to a person who advocates for gifted and talented children is the development of a "crusader complex" which is marked by a we-versus-them attitude and an overwhelming desire to march forward and "do battle" even when it is not appropriate."

PITFALLS IN ADVOCACY FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

Pitfall #1 - Using an Adversarial Rather than a Persuasive Approach

There is a natural tendency for us to model after the advocates for the rights of minorities and the rights of the handicapped. They were successful, so we feel that if we do the same thing we will also reap big rewards for the children we represent. Unfortunately this line of reasoning will not work. Those "other advocates" were very adept in various pressure tactics. But these tactics will not work as well for advocates of the gifted for three reasons:

(a) The cause is different. The basic rights of the handicapped and children from minority background were violated when they were systematically segregated from others. This inequity created a basis for guilt among those responsible for the segregation. Guilt makes us more responsive to pressure tactics. Unfortunately, few people feel very guilty about not doing something extra for children who have outstanding abilities. Nor can you contend that gifted and talented children are being denied access to an education. Even though they may be bored and unhappy, they are still in school.

(b) Times have changed. Everyone has learned to be more assertive as pressure tactics have become a part of everyday interactions. Thus pressure no longer provides the high visibility for a cause that it once did.

(c) We are wiser. We have learned a lot from the 60's and 70's. Legal proceedings can take years to complete. Even when the cause has been won, or a mandate incorporated into law, it will be a long time before state and local systems can implement the letter, much less the spirit, of the ruling. We are finally realizing that change is not an event; it is an evolutionary process.

In summary, "winning through intermediation" may work beautifully with hotel clerks who lose confirmed reservations, but it frequently backfires when trying to apply it to decision makers. The better approach would be to model yourself after a good salesperson. It may not be as inspiring as the "march into battle" adversarial approach, but it is more likely to be effective.

Pitfall #2 - Assuming that People in Administration and Political Positions are Not Too Bright or Not Very Knowledgeable - or Both

It is amazing to see advocates in action who are displaying obvious contempt for the legislators, board members, or administrators with whom they are dealing. Perhaps this occurs because of a disrespect for "politicians," or because the advocates feel that their superior knowledge of the subject at hand puts them in a superior position. Such attitudes and actions are destructive to any cause. They are particularly deadly if the advocate is speaking on behalf of the gifted.

The problem with advocates and their disrespect for decision makers probably stems from a lack of understanding and contact with them. The vast

majority of decision makers are exceptionally competent and capable people. They have good intentions and they honestly try to improve education for all children. They are extremely busy people and they simply do not have time to learn about all of the topics we advocates expect them to know. People in state legislatures or on school boards are generally not educators, so they have the additional burden of having to learn quickly many of the things educators have learned over several years.

Pitfall #3 - Being Impatient

It is very tough to be patient when you see children whose abilities need attention and development right now. But patience in advocacy for the gifted is more than a virtue, it is a requirement.

Advocate outbursts are extremely counterproductive. They can lead to the exclusion of that advocate or all other advocates for that particular cause from further discussions and hearings. If the outburst occurs during a one-to-one meeting or a telephone conversation, the advocate may never have the opportunity to talk with that decision maker again.

Pitfall #4 - Being Human

Perhaps the toughest challenge you will face as an advocate for the gifted will not be to testify before a legislative committee, but to manage to get a group of fellow advocates to work together. Advocates cannot play the role of a single knight jousting in a tournament while the rest of the group are on the sides "cheering" with occasional letters or phone calls to decision makers. You must be willing to share the spotlight with your colleagues, and even to stand aside so that some key legislator, administrator or board member can take the credit for your success.

It takes a chorus of committed persons to get the support needed for top-quality programs for every gifted child. Getting that chorus together requires a lot of effort and selflessness so that no one voice rises above the others."

"Channeling Your Energies in the Right Direction through Systematic Advocacy

Now that you have thought about what not to do, let us look at a process that can make your efforts more systematic and successful. The process consists of four basic phases:

1) Needs Assessment - determining what support you currently have, what support you will need and what they will 'buy';

2) Planning - mapping out what you want to happen; how you will present your request; and how you will get the votes needed for approval;

3) Contact - presenting your request to the decision-makers whose approval is essential;

4) Follow-up and Evaluation - doing a "post-mortem" on your efforts to determine what to do and what not to do next time. This phase usually merges into the needs assessment of the next advocacy effort, so the process is a continuous cycle.

It takes a lot of stamina to give your best energy and ideas to all four phases. It is essential to spend time to carry out the needed activities in all four phases."

Advocacy Efforts (National, State and Local)

The importance of advocacy for effective identification and education of gifted children is demonstrated by national surge in attempting to coordinate the efforts of all national, state and local organizations and agencies working in behalf of the gifted. The National Alliance of State Associations for the Gifted (NASAG) serves as a burgeoning network to motivate cooperative endeavors across the nation, particularly with the Council of State Directors of Programs for the Gifted, the National Association for Gifted Children, the Council for Exceptional Children and other appropriate organizations and groups. These efforts include lobbying at the federal and state levels, a telephone informational network across the states, an informative newsletter, and a constant plea for broadening the advocacy efforts of all interested individuals and groups.

In North Carolina, two organizations are active members of NASAG and attempt to serve parents, school and college personnel, and all persons dedicated to the education of gifted children; (1) Parents for the Advancement of Gifted Education (PAGE); (2) the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented. Information on these organizations is presented in the appendix.

PART II

PARENTS AND GIFTED CHILDREN WORKING TOGETHER

INTRODUCTION

Part II of this book is presented with an eye to offering functional assistance and ideas for parents in their work with gifted children.

Chapter I offers a sampling of homelearning ideas and activities grouped according to some subject-matter areas and general competences, geared to appropriate child development.

Chapter II presents some broader types of parent-child activities, along with functional discussion and suggestions.

Chapter III, "Tackling Specific Problems" includes several common concerns voiced by parents of gifted children and some concrete suggestions of what parents might do to address these concerns.

We urge parents to use these ideas with gifted children in the spirit of enjoyment in which they are intended. By doing this, parents can become good models, thus providing the kind of learning environment that will help to insure success in school, along with the development of a positive attitude for learning.

CHAPTER I

HOMELEARNING ACTIVITIES

This chapter offers a sampling of functional ideas and activities for parents to experiment with in their work with gifted children. This sampling is not to be regarded as a magical list, but merely as food for thought and evaluation for practicality. The hope is that these ideas and activities will (a) motivate parents to create other appropriate ideas geared to the personality, age level and interest of the child, and (b) ignite discussion and sharing of ideas among other parents of gifted children.

Occasionally, a suggested activity may seem a bit trivial or not commensurate with the advanced level of thinking of the child. However, this list is an attempt to get at some of the basic competencies which all children should possess. Therefore, we reiterate that each idea or activity lends itself to further expression in scope or complexity depending on the specific child with whom the parent is working.

So -- assess this sampling of activities as they fall into particular subject-matter categories and revise, expand, delete or substitute in the most appropriate and functional ways.

Art

To understand principles of design, proportion and balance; to develop perceptual and creative skills, along with aesthetic appreciation, involve your child in:

1) Re-arranging the pictures, furniture and other objects in the child's room according to different criteria of color, shape, grouping, etc.

2) Creating a new family crest, using objects from family occupations, hobbies, habits or dress.

3) Asking your child, while shopping, to look for coordinated clothing according to unity of colors, print patterns, bodily color and shape.

4) Carrying out a tour of selected buildings in town and discussing architectural features and probable reasons for design and location.

5) Taking your child outdoors to carefully feel, while blindfolded, a small tree, bush or other safe plant, followed by drawing a picture of that object without having looked at it.

6) Drawing a circle on a piece of paper and asking your child what he/she sees, such as a snowball, dime, owl's eye, etc., and suggesting that the circle be added to as imagination takes over.

7) Encouraging your child to make up dance movements to a song.

8) Including your child in picking out paint, wallpaper and other objects for different parts of the house.

9) Letting your child create a story -- illustrated and possibly set to music -- in which he/she is the main character.

10) Playing different kinds of music, and/or showing different types of paintings and asking your child to describe the feeling each one produces.

Language and Reading

To develop the expression of ideas and feelings in written and oral language; to learn to listen critically, interpret information, develop vocabulary, and to enjoy a variety of literature, involve your child in -

1) Listing unique objectives which your child would use to describe himself/herself, or another family member, or a famous person.

2) Cutting out several appropriate letters from the "Dear Abby" column of your newspaper. Ask your child to write his/her answers, then compare and discuss the answers with Abby's.

3) Identifying a special social problem about which he/she is concerned. Ask him/her to write the appropriate congressmen regarding needed legislation.

4) Describing the feelings conveyed in different types of music with as many words as he/she can think of.

5) Listening to a newscast and discussing the causes and effects of the described events.

6) Letting family members take turns in selecting, reading and discussing an appropriate poem at dinner each evening.

7) Giving your child a series of lines and asking him to make up follow-up lines that rhyme.

8) Writing out several long words, then asking your child to identify as many short words in each long word.

9) Routinely visiting the public library and learning how to use reference materials.

10) Establishing a personal reading tree for your child. Place a leaf with the book's title on the tree when a book is completed. (Rewards might be discussed.)

Mathematics

To develop the ability to classify, compute and solve problems; to understand basic mathematical rules, processes, and constructions, involve your child in -

1) Taking a walk around your home, making a list of things your child sees, touches and hears. Have the child classify things in groups and sub-groups.

2) Charting the number of phone calls family members receive for a week. Analyze data to determine length of calls, by whom, and what type of purposes.

3) Recording mileage at the beginning and end of a trip. Figure total miles and number of gallons of gas. Figure M/P gal and M/P/H.

4) Hammering nails in a block of wood. Let your child use rubberbands to make different geometric shapes.

5) Having your child compute the amounts of ingredients needed when you triple the recipe for a main dish.

6) Using a stopwatch have several members of the family walk at a normal pace for ten seconds. Have your child determine the number of feet and/or meters per second and show the findings on a graph.

7) Letting your child balance your checkbook for a month.

8) Having your child compute the amount of time he/she spends each week in such activities as sleeping, school, television, leisure, etc.

9) Using the daily weather forecast to teach percentage. What is the chance for precipitation, etc.

10) Selecting randomly several objects and discussing with your child the common features of each, i.e., ways they might be classified together.

Science

To understand the significance of living things, conservation, preservation and wise use of natural resources; to develop the ability to deal with experimentation and scientific processes, involve your child in -

1) Listing and observing the characteristics which distinguish living from non-living things.

2) Saving seeds from food the family eats. Discuss the similarities and differences of these seeds. Dry the seeds, plant them in a dirt box and observe growth patterns.

3) Finding an ant hill and establish periods of observations of the ants when bread crumbs, drops of water and honey are introduced.

4) Pointing out real examples of how animals and birds build their homes. Discuss.

5) Discussing with your child what it might be like if fish had fur, birds had fins, or squirrels had wings, and how the life styles of these creatures would change.

6) Discussing some simple examples of probability, and the probable accuracy of some of your child's predictions.

7) Learning to use simple scientific instruments such as laboratory equipment and on into more intricate materials as interests develop.

8) Finding temperature differences both indoors and outdoors and the various causes for change.

9) Brainstorming matters of scientific curiosity as they arise in your child's mind.

10) Participating in the collection of papers, aluminum cans, glass, etc., for recycling and studying the processes thereof.

Social Studies

To develop a sense of time and chronology; to appreciate intercultural likenesses and differences; to comprehend human rights and responsibilities; to conceptualize trends, movements and change in the past, present and future, involve your child in -

1) Arranging chronologically an album of pictures of as many generations of the family as possible. Discuss "genealogy."

2) Developing a time line for a typical day, a special week, or a certain year. Discuss any revisions your child might like to make in the time line and why.

3) Driving through residential sections of your community that appear to be lower, middle and upper class housing. Discuss varying patterns of living, ranging from poverty to affluence.

4) Studying a world map or globe, selecting specific areas for probing into matters of population, climate, commerce, communication, government, etc.

5) Asking your child to describe those things which he/she has that the grandparents did not have when they were children and discuss the effects of those changes.

6) Studying what persons or groups have been granted rights in recent years and discussing the causes and effects of such situations.

7) Pretending to live in an energy-void place for a day. Discuss what energy conveniences would be missed the most, along with other possible energy sources.

8) Collecting folklore, regional expressions, antiques and relics which can tell the story of historical development of your community or region.

9) Compiling and discussing a list of rights and responsibilities of each family member.

10) Observing the phases of the moon for two months, charting the number of days in each phase and comparing the observations of the two distinct months. Discuss any differences and the effects thereof.

Health and Physical Education

To accept responsibility for one's own health (mental and physical); to become knowledgeable of the human body and the effects of positive and negative treatments; and to develop efficient motor skills, involve your child in -

1) Identifying and evaluating existing health care products on the market. Discuss their usage, comparative costs, advantages and disadvantages.

2) Conducting a home safety survey, noting potential problems, and making recommendations for improvement.

3) Studying the elements and materials which are nutritional "musts" for the family, and preparing suitable menus.

4) Reviewing recent health fads and speculating about their values in the future.

5) Examining the contents of the family medicine cabinet, and discussing the good and bad uses of medicines and drugs.

6) Visiting, studying and evaluating several exercise programs such as aerobics, jazzercise, calesthenics, etc.

7) Discussing the relationship of mental health to physical health and the importance of diet, exercise, state of mind, etc. to both.

8) Identifying and discussing age - appropriate moral dilemmas, such as stealing, cheating, sex activity, etc.

9) Studying your values as a parent and your child's values and the effects of customs, traditions and changing times.

10) Discussing world problems relating to health such as pollution, environmental controls, conflicting ideologies of world powers, population explosion, etc.

Once again we urge parents to add to these areas by probing into such topics as the psychology of human behavior, general philosophy, futurism, brain-functioning and any other area your child's mind begins to search. Listing ideas and activities for appropriate parent-child study and interaction must be a constant process. Several of the sources listed in the Bibliography of this book provide further suggestions for functional activities for gifted students.

CHAPTER II

ADDITIONAL PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITIES

- In Your Footsteps (Helping Your Child Develop Values)
- Reading: A Family Affair
- Homelearning Activities in Music
- Developing Writing Skills
- Homelearning Activities for Science Enrichment
- Developmental Activities Using the Newspaper
- Television Viewing in the Home

IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS

Parents influence the growth and development of their children in many ways--by rewarding positive behavior and, especially, by serving as good MODELS. As children tend to model their parents in their behavior and values, parents should seriously consider the demands and expectations of parenting and their effectiveness in carrying out this most important responsibility. As parents, if you hope that your children will reflect the characteristics which follow, how well do you create the conditions for their development?

IF YOU WANT YOUR CHILD TO BE:

CONFIDENT

Learn to praise (80% of parent comments re: child behavior is negative)
Let him know he's needed, not simply important
Contrive many success experiences
Develop reasonable limits and consistently maintain them
Help your child learn to describe self with reasonable accuracy
Don't expect perfection .
Don't over-react to mistakes
Let him Be
Allow your child to fail
Don't fight his battles (perhaps some of them)
Punishment should be educative--not punitive
Avoid sibling comparisons

HAPPY

Enjoy your child
Reflect a sense of humor
Communicate openly about emotions, e.g., causes, means of expression
Respect his emotions
Be sensitive to the psychological needs of your child
Maintain a secure and stable home environment
Be affectionate

CONSIDERATE

Respect his rights
Insist on fair play
Be a model of tolerance
Involve your child in role-playing "Filling Someone Else's Shoes"
Be an "active" listener, i.e., non-verbally affirming what he says
Admit your own mistakes

HONEST

Help your child clarify values, posing moral dilemmas and considering alternatives and consequences
Be honest yourself
Discuss "honest" versus "dishonest" behavior as reflected in television programs and in real situations

INQUISITIVE

Provide opportunities for exploration
Ask numerous questions
Answer questions patiently or, preferably, help him learn to find answers for himself
Teach him to observe his environment
Spend time with your child
Implement reasonable "safety" limits on curiosity pursuits

IMAGINATIVE

Be a "problem-finder"; brainstorm a variety of possible solutions to the problems
Encourage "flights of fantasy"--share your own
Provide materials that don't have a specific use
Don't over-structure use of time
Provide space that need not be kept clean

RESPONSIBLE

Assign responsibilities. Hold him accountable?
Help your child learn to make critical choices
Insist on the conservation of resources
Help him plan ahead
Give him increasing amounts of freedom--what he can handle

SENSITIVE

Respect his feelings
Be a good listener
Practice "give and take"
Point our the "small" things in living and life
Avoid "snap" judgments
Expose your child to a variety of people and situations
Develop the physical senses (e.g., touching, hearing, seeing) observing and interpreting sights and sounds
Discuss the feelings of others and reasons for their feelings
Be willing to express your feelings

INDIVIDUALISTIC

Be receptive and open-minded to his ideas
Know when to "cut the apron strings"
Avoid comparisons with others
Don't expect him to be like you
Be willing to trust
Encourage the development of hobbies and projects requiring independent effort
Help him identify his special and unique characteristics

AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

Encourage him to express his opinions
Set aside times for one-on-one conversation
Don't "talk down" to your child
Listen attentively
Be willing to share your feelings
Periodically minimize distractions, e.g., turn off television and radio
Discuss possible meanings of different types of non-verbal communication, e.g., facial expressions, eye contact

REALISTIC

Involve your child in family decisionmaking
Be willing to discuss and expose your child to "real" situations, e.g., death, homosexuality, limited family resources, divorce
Assist your child in setting goals and examining alternatives and consequences
Point our the existence of harsh realities, e.g., inequality of opportunity, unfair laws
Allow your child to fail--and win
Set limits and maintain them, e.g., allowance, bedtime, curfew
Help your child assess his strengths/ weaknesses

AFFECTIONATE

Be affectionate
Openly share your feelings
Discuss ways of expressing emotions--and practice them, e.g., touching, smiling, crying
Discuss ways of telling others how you respect and care for them

HEALTHY

Insist on the practice of good health habits, e.g., adequate sleep, weight control, appropriate clothing
Serve nutritious meals
Initiate a family exercise program
Identify and remedy unsafe situations in the home
Involve him in organized and unorganized recreational activities

AN ACHIEVER

Clarify with your child some short-term goals and means of achieving them
Establish realistic expectations
Maintain an interest in his interests
Know when and when not to help
Help him identify some strategies for accentuating his strengths and eliminating his weaknesses
Create opportunities for success

FLEXIBLE

Discuss various sides of issues
Model open-mindedness
Reward behaviors which reflect tolerance, acceptance and forgiveness
Discuss when inflexible behavior may be desirable

MORAL

Discuss "right" and "wrong"
Point out the short and long-term consequences of inappropriate behavior
Help the child clarify and develop his values
Let him know how you feel about moral issues
Reinforce "positive behavior"

REVERENT

Discuss the sanctity of life
Point out the "majesty" and order of the universe
Conduct family worship; attend worship services
Insist on moments of reverence at appropriate times

READING: A FAMILY AFFAIR

Parents are the most important teachers of their children. Homes that reflect a good climate for learning - where parents are good models and enjoy doing things and learning with their children - greatly influence achievement by the children in school and in life. Many opportunities exist in the home for parents to be teachers and work as effective partners with their child's teacher in the development of important skills.

Tips to Parents:

1. Take your child to the library to check out his own book. If possible, participate in story hour.
2. Cut out words from newspaper headlines. Ask your child to use them to construct sentences.
3. After your child tells you a story, print the story and read it back to him. Let him see his words.
4. Be a good model by reading yourself.
5. Subscribe to a child's magazine in your child's name.
6. Read a familiar story to your child, e.g., "Cinderella," "Robin Hood." Ask your child to make up a similar story as if it were occurring today.
7. Start a neighborhood book club, exchanging books and ideas.
8. During breakfast, ask your child to read from the cereal box and explain what he has read.
9. Give your child a variety of household objects and ask your child to create a story using the objects.
10. Involve brothers and sisters in reading to each other.
11. If possible, purchase some illustrated children's encyclopedias and encourage the child to find information for himself.
12. Help your child maintain a scrapbook of "People I See and Places I Go." Illustrate them and write descriptive captions.
13. With purchases that have "directions," ask your child to read and explain them.
14. Help your child create his own book which includes short stories he has written.
15. Help your child acquire a Pen Pal.
16. Encourage your child to develop a dictionary of new words he learns.
17. Print the words of a favorite story or song and teach the words to your child.
18. Ask your child to create a story about a favorite or fictitious person.
19. Encourage your child to write "Thank-You" notes and compose his own "Special Day" cards.
20. Separate the sections of a comic strip. Ask your child to arrange them in order and write a dialogue.
21. After reading a story to your child, ask him to summarize and tell you the main point.
22. Give your child a root word to see how many words he can form from it.
23. Tape record your child as he reads a favorite story so that he can hear himself read.
24. While reading a story to your child, stop periodically and ask him what comes next.

25. Select pictures from magazines and ask your child to make up a related story.
26. After listening to some favorite music, ask your child to describe how it makes him feel.
27. Encourage your child to act out action verbs.
28. Ask your child to point out objects that begin with certain sounds.
29. Jointly pantomime favorite stories.
30. Encourage your child to create original prayers or family devotionals.
31. Take time to play word games like Scrabble with your child.
32. Periodically set aside time for a Family Read-In.
33. Ask your child to create a story using himself as the main character.
34. Select "Dear Abby" letters concerned with common family problems. Ask your child to compose responses.
35. Tell a round-robin story with each person adding a part to it.
36. Make a family reading tree and hang it on a wall. Place a leaf with the book's title on the tree when a book is completed. At the end of a period of time, reward the family member with the most leaves on his limb.
41. Take turns at the dinner table with each family member reading a favorite poem.
42. Read and discuss as a family great classics prior to their television showing.
43. Provide the child a book allowance to encourage him to start his own library.
44. Allow X amount of television viewing for X amount of reading.
45. Make a habit of visiting good bookstores.
46. Never use reading as a punishment!
47. Save special volumes for fun times together, such as a vacation.
48. Exchange books as gifts.
49. Introduce your child to all sections of the newspaper.
50. Prior to a major family purchase, ask your child to research related consumer information.
51. Ask your child to read about his favorite foods and determine their nutritional value.
52. Maintain a star chart for books read by family members.
53. Help your child develop a balanced schedule of activities.
54. Read and discuss family insurance policies and warranties on appliances.
55. Read the court news and discuss items such as "misdemeanor" and "felony."

BE A GOOD MODEL!

HOME-LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN MUSIC

COMPETENCY: The learner will be able to demonstrate musical skills.

1. Classify environmental (natural) sounds according to whether they produce a steady beat or no beat.

Examples:	steady beat	no beat
	windshield wipers	bird sounds
	dripping faucet	fire siren
	people walking	a rolling ball
	bouncing ball	sound of a lawn mower
	hammering a nail	sound of a food processor

2. Make a list of loud and soft sounds you can find at home. Include examples of sound sources which can be both loud and soft. Are there any sound sources which can gradually get louder or softer?

3. How many nursery rhymes do you know? Establish an underlying steady beat by clapping your hands or patting your knees and chant the nursery rhyme with a steady beat. This will develop the concept of duration. (Hickory Dickory Dock, Humpty Dumpty, Baa, Baa, Black Sheep)

4. How many different sounds can you make with your hands? your feet? your mouth? Choose a sound to accompany a song on the radio. Find a picture in a book or magazine and by making the sounds you "see" in the picture, have someone guess what the picture is about.

5. Make a "mystery sound" tape. Provide your child with an inexpensive cassette recorder and a blank tape. Let him record sounds he hears at home plus the voices of all the family and/or neighborhood. The child can then play the tape for others who will attempt to identify the sounds.

6. Choose a song (probably from the "top forty") that has a beat and strong rhythm. Ask your child and any other family members to move, in time to the music, from a seat or from a standing position. "Plant your feet! You are a tree! Only your trunk and branches can move." Don't ask your child to do something that you or other family members won't try. The child should not feel that he is "on display". Have your movements or his movements imitated by others. How many different movements can you create?

7. Here's a challenge! Choose a familiar song ("Are You Sleeping?", "This Old Man") Can you keep the steady beat in your feet while you clap the rhythm of the words (one clap per syllable)? Go slowly at first-it's not easy! When the task is mastered, abundant praise is in order.

8. Create a rhythm chant of the food you will eat at a particular meal or the foods you like best. (McDonald's and Burger King might pay a fortune for one of these.) Children will be able to recognize where long and/or short sounds fit best. Chart your chant.

   Ham - bur - ger Piz - za Pie Mus - tard, Ket - chup

   and a French fry

9. Play "Copy Cat" with your child. Tap or clap a rhythm pattern, which could be a phrase of a familiar song and ask your child to echo what you have clapped. (Inexpensive wooden dowels make good rhythm sticks.) Expand this activity into a guessing game by tapping the rhythm of the first phrase of a familiar song, i.e. patriotic, Christmas, and guessing the title of the song. Give clues when you begin this activity.

10. For the child who enjoys singing: Pretend you are a wandering minstrel. Sing a favorite song for your mother, father or neighbor. Costume or label yourself in some way so they will know you expect a penny!
Be a singing messenger for your family or the neighborhood. For a small fee you can deliver birthday, anniversary, get well or thinking of you greetings. This could be expanded to singing a message over the phone.

11. Play a memory game with a favorite song. It will test the child's ability to "think" the beat, tempo and tonality.
    a. Set up a steady beat and establish the tonality (pitches you will use).
    b. Sing the entire song.
    c. Without a pause sing the song immediately. This time, however, sing only the last word in each phrase. Anyone who sings too soon or too late must drop out. Examples: "Yankee Doodle", "Amazing Grace", "Joy to the World"

12. Good tonal memory will help your child learn new songs more easily. Play a pitch on a piano. Everyone hums that pitch, then "thinks" it. Count silently to eight, then point to someone. Can that person sing the pitch out loud?

13. Create a "new language of your very own. Write down a few words from your language and their meanings. Speak some of the new words using musical elements (pitch, dynamics, accent, rhythm) to convey the idea of the word.

14. If you were going to play music that expressed the mood you're in today, what would it sound like? Would someone else be able to guess your mood just by hearing it? If you have a collection of popular records, choose one to describe your mood every day for a week. Ask someone to describe your mood after hearing your selection. How accurately did you choose descriptive music? If you have a favorite piece of classical music, research the composer's intentions when he wrote the music. Did the composer effectively convey his mood to you?

15. How is your life affected by music? Where do you encounter music in your daily life? Keep a log for one week of all the time you spend in listening to music via radio, stereo, video, etc. Classify the type or style of music listened to - top 40, country, classical, religious. Also question family members as to the amount of time spent in listening to music.
Keep a calendar of events in your community for one month showing opportunities for music - recitals, concerts, etc.

16. The concepts of repetition & contrast are basic to analyzing music.
    a. design a building that shows repetition and contrast.
    b. use shapes (circles, triangles) to assemble a collage.
    c. make up a dance that utilizes repetition and contrast.
    d. write a poem that presents an idea, repeats the idea, then introduces a contrast.

DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS

Introduction

Writing is an important skill that is essential throughout life. We write to communicate with others through personal letters, employment applications, "letters to the editor", and so forth. Children need to understand how useful writing can be and should be encouraged to write for a variety of reasons. The only way to become a confident, effective writer is by writing.

How Can I Help My Child Write?

Try some of these suggestions:

1. Provide adequate materials for writing. Chalkboards, decorative paper and unusual pens and pencils make writing appealing.

2. Encourage relatives and friends, when purchasing gifts for the child, to consider stationary, desk lamps, reference books, and other writing materials.

3. Let children help write letters to friends and family. Young children may dictate sections to you.

4. Establish a quiet place for reading and writing without disturbances.

5. Show interest in your child's writing by listening as he reads it. Point our what is good about it.

6. Read good poetry and prose to your child to provide models of writing and reading in practice.

7. Share your writing with your child to show the variety of adult writing (letters, notes, forms, etc.).

8. Let your child play secretary by writing a note or list you dictate.

9. Encourage your child to proofread his work for mechanical errors and, more importantly, the clearness and smoothness of the message.

10. After some writing experience, help your child revise his work to make it clearer to the reader. Be POSITIVE instead of critical.

11. Display your child's writing at home for others to see.

12. Encourage your child to keep a diary about interesting events, a hobby or interest. If it is considered private by the child, respect that privacy.

13. Help your child find a pen pal. Lists may be available from schools or children's magazines.

14. Avoid using writing as punishment. This causes a strong dislike for writing.

15. Provide varied experiences for your child. Discuss these experiences so that your child may write about them.

16. Give child access to a typewriter or computer, if possible.

17. Provide your child with an appropriate picture dictionary, dictionary, and thesaurus.

18. Ask for suggestions from your child's teacher for writing ideas.

19. Encourage your child to write for information on topics of interest.

Activities for Any Age

1. Choose an imaginative topic and list as many items as you can (sour things, things that chill, morning things, things with corners, wet things, things found in two's, useless items, crunchy things, etc.)

2. Write your "dream menu" for a week.

3. Write a thank you note to someone who is special to you. Write a letter to a friend or relative who lives away.

4. Write directions to your house from a friend's house.

5. Make a grocery/shopping list of things you would like.

6. Write sentences with each word starting with the same letter, or with a successive letter of the alphabet. (Big boys better be busy. A camel did everything for George.)

7. Write original captions for comic strips and pictures from the newspaper or magazines. Write an account of an imaginary visit to another planet.

8. Send postcards to friends while on vacation.

9. Assist child in beginning and maintaining a scrapbook.

10. Encourage and help send cards for all occasions--birthday, get-well, etc.

11. Write captions for photos in family album.

12. Write a "recipe" for a quality like friendliness, honesty, etc.

13. Provide a variety of household objects (jar, rolling pin, Pringles' cans). Have child write sentences or a story about the objects.

Activities for the Younger Child (K-3)

1. Write a story about a family outing or trip. This may be made into a booklet.

2. Make an alphabet book with pictures and words for each letter.

3. Choose a favorite picture or photo. List all the words you can that tell about the picture. Group the words and tell why you put these words together.

4. Have the child write two or three sentences about thoughts, feelings, or events.

5. Make a greeting card. Compose the verse for the inside.

Activities for the Older Child (4 and up)

1. Write a critique of a television show you've watched.

2. Re-write an ad or television commercial to make it funny, serious, or to advertise a different product.

3. Write a note to someone who reads in circles (write in circles).

4. Write directions for doing your favorite things (how to fly a kite, etc.).

5. Re-write nursery rhymes or funny poems using names of people you know.

6. Re-write a recipe for a younger child to follow.

7. Re-write a fairy tale or nursery rhyme with a modern setting and characters.

HOMELEARNING ACTIVITIES FOR SCIENCE ENRICHMENT

Introduction

Parents are the most important persons in the development of children. Parents who are willing to do things with their children and listen to what they have to say can help to develop a positive attitude for learning. As children learn in all that they do, many important values and skills (observation, analysis, evaluation) may be learned from their parents during routine tasks that occur in the home. Use these activities in a way that will be fun for your child! Doing these activities--and others like them--will strengthen your relationship with your child, assist their development in school and help them develop the "talents" they have.

Activities

1. Take a nature walk and collect seeds from several different trees/flowers. Discuss each plant's reproductive cycle. Then design a new seed and cycle for each tree/flower.

2. Collect hawk and owl pellets. Soak them in warm soapy water for several hours and pick it apart with tweezers and needles. Decide what the animal has eaten to have produced the specific regurgitation. Describe the animal's diet.

3. Make a terrarium and place in it several land snails. They lay eggs in May or October. Watch the walls of the container very closely for the tiny eggs. Are baby snails born with a shell?

4. One of the first steps in identifying a mushroom is finding the color of the spores. Cut a mushroom off at the stem. Place the mushroom gill side down on a piece of paper. Cover with a bowl and let it set overnight. Observe paper the next morning. Identify the mushroom. (Remember to always wash your hands carefully after handling any mushrooms. Clean under your nails too.)

5. Collect as many wooly worms in the fall as you can. Observe the width of the black bands found on their backs. Predict the harshness of the coming winter. Then chart on a calendar the morning temperature of the days during the winter months. Calculate the average monthly temperatures. In spring, evaluate your prediction based on collected data.

6. Observe the moon for one month. Draw what you see each evening. Explain what happened.

7. One of the best areas in which to experience the rich variety of life on the woodland floor is in a fallen tree or limb. Find a tree that has fallen. With a hand lens observe all the animals, plants, fungi, homes, and processes that are taking place on or in the decaying wood. How could these activities be compared to a waste treatment plant?

8. Smell a chestnut in the early summer. Could you devise a method to prevent this odor from spreading throughout a community without harming the tree or other plants around it?

9. Choose two of your favorite photos of our natural environment. Explain the various cycles taking place in each photograph.

10. Compare the falling of the leaves to the death of an elephant. What determines when an elephant will die?

11. List some similarities between a bike and a bird flying. Design a new way to transport man from place to place.

12. Compare the fall webworms' webs to a spider's web. Make web prints.

13. Compare the seed arrangement in a sunflower's head to a land snail.

14. Compare the random branching of a major river in your area to the largest tree in your yard and its branching.

15. Compare a bomb exploding to the seed movement when you blow a dried dandelion blossom.

16. Compare a grapevine to a ram. Note its growth pattern.

17. Compare the cross section of a bell pepper to a milkweed seed pod. Note the "architectural" design.

18. Compare a box turtle's shell to a cluster of milk bubbles. (Hint: Look with a hand lens.)

19. Compare stellar galaxies, fiddleheads of ferns, and water emptying from a bathtub. Hint: Draw a picture of each.

20. Compare the lengths of different parts of your body. Which parts are equal? Which parts are one half the length of another part? One third?

21. Compare the calories consumed by family members each day. What is the relationship between consumed calories and their weight?

22. Suppose you were the mother of five baby field mice. You had lived in this field for many, many years. And suddenly this was becoming the site of a big, new office building. What would happen to your family? Describe what you would do and how you'd feel.

23. Predict what would happen if: it rained money?
the color green didn't exist?
pigeons were the size of turkeys?
ice didn't float?
the gravitational pull of the earth was stronger?
water froze at 55°F?

24. Hypothesize about what would happen if the trees suddenly decided not to drop their leaves in the fall. Make a list and extend it as far as possible about present and future consequences. Discuss the pros and cons of decidious trees.

25. Hypothesize what the powder is on butterflies' wings. What is its purpose? Also, what might be the power generated by the flapping of a butterfly's wings?

26. Ask your child what he/she likes/dislikes about (anything) and to justify the reasons.

27. Draw a circle on a piece of paper and ask your child what he "sees"--snowball, dime, owl's eye. This is called "brain storming."

28. Plan a weekly menu of meals for the family. Use only the foods that are already on the pantry shelves. Be creative.

29. Find out all you can about Mrs. Carl Sandburg. How was she so very different from her husband? What was her contribution to our society?

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES USING THE NEWSPAPER

The newspaper is a valuable teaching tool adaptable to many subjects, uses and interests. The positive practices of these uses will enhance a child's ability to make wiser choices and more mature decisions as an adult.

Children can benefit intellectually, socially, and emotionally by proper usage of the newspaper. The newspaper can promote critical reading, explore the current and historical impact of the media on society and themselves, and encourage leadership roles.

Listed below are numerous activities which provide exploration, learning, and enjoyment for the child. All of these activities can be done at home in a relatively short amount of time with little assistance from an adult. The activities are divided by subject matter for easy reference and can be adapted to different age levels.

ACTIVITIES:

Language Arts:

1. Write a newspaper article about your school day. Be sure to address; who, when, where, how and why.
2. Select a picture from a newspaper and write an original news release based on that story.
3. Try to find news stories with typographical errors and correct these errors.
4. Choose an editorial you feel strongly about and reply with a letter to be sent to the editor.
5. Write a "how-to-do-it" feature story.
6. Do a biographical sketch of a favorite sport participant.
7. Keep a "new" word list for words of known foreign origin.
8. Write a classified ad selling something.
9. In a given time limit, scan the paper and mark as many different types of punctuation as you can find.

Science:

1. Research the trade winds and their patterns.
2. Clip the weather map from the newspaper and follow a weather pattern across the United States.
3. Check the accuracy of the weather news for the day.
4. Make a scrapbook of all articles dealing with environmental issues.

Arts:

1. Select a humorous personality from the newspaper and assume that personality for the day.

2. Select a famous person from the newspaper and dress that part for the day.

3. Study the comic page. Develop your own comic strip complete with dialogue.

4. Draw comics that:
   - Teach a possible lesson
   - Illustrate an important human weakness
   - Illustrate an important human strength
   - Entertain

Social Studies:

1. Make a list of all the countries listed on the first ten pages of the newspaper.

2. Make a list of all the states listed on the first ten pages of the newspaper.

3. Keep a chart of these lists for one week and graph the countries and states found.

Math:

1. Select an advertisement and underline all numbers having one digit, circle numbers with two digits, and put a cross mark through numbers with three digits.

2. Plan and compute the cost of a meal for your family from the supermarket.

3. Choose a restaurant to celebrate your birthday and estimate the cost for your whole family to attend.

4. Using a recipe:
   - Double the recipe
   - Triple the recipe
   - Halve the recipe
   - Prepare enough for 30 people

5. Measure a newspaper page to find: length, area, width and diagonals.

6. Given a specific amount of money, do the grocery shopping for a week.

General:

1. Locate the "masthead" of the paper with its disclosure of the ownership of the paper, subscription rates, etc.

2. From the sports pages, clip out the pictures of different kinds of sports. Mount and label the pictures.

3. Find a specialty business in the newspaper that sells each of the following items: automobile tires, televisions, men's clothing, furniture, jewelry, real estate, shoes, groceries, toys, used automobiles, etc.

4. Make your own comic showing your favorite comic character as a student in your school.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why include the national weather map in the newspaper?

2. What type of stories are the most interesting to the teen-ager, adult?

3. Should national or international news stories compose the front page?

4. Which section of the newspaper is read most often by adults? by teens?

5. Why include advice columns in the newspaper?

6. Is there anything you think should be included in the newspaper which has ben left out?

TELEVISION VIEWING IN THE HOME

The quality and quantity of television viewing significantly influence the growth and development of young persons. The average child in this country watches television four hours a day--and has spent more hours watching television by the time he finishes high school than he has spent in school. Children do watch--and like television. Critics feel that such extensive passive behavior is unhealthy, aside from concerns that television provides excessive exposure to violence and helps form questionable values relating to sex, nutrition, etc. (The average child has observed 18,000 television murders before he reaches adulthood! The typical Saturday morning cartoon, e.g., The Roadrunner Show, contains much violence and aggression.) Is television a reflection of a culture's morals or does it form them? Some critics favor government censorship as a means of regulating television. However, efforts by parents to help their children develop intelligent television viewing skills may be a more appropriate approach. The following are ideas parents may wish to consider:

GENERAL ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss with your child "good" and "bad" behavior in a program to help him begin to develop values.

2. Be a good model. Be selective in what/how much TV you watch.

3. Discuss the propaganda reflected in various TV ads, e.g., what is true, untrue, misleading.

4. Use discretion in letting your child watch programs labeled "parental guidance suggested."

5. Avoid using TV as a babysitter.

6. Discuss with your child alternative endings to programs. What if.....

7. Provide limits on the hours or amount of TV your child may watch (e.g., TV only after homework.)

8. Reward your child, e.g., 30 minutes of TV viewing for 30 minutes of reading.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

1. Listen for words used in programs you and your child are watching that may be unfamiliar. Help him build his vocabulary by discussing such words.

2. Following the viewing of an historical program, the parent and child might go to a reference book and compare the program with the actual event.

3. Ask your child to role-play a favorite TV character, writing and presenting a probable scene.

4. When programs, like Captain Kangaroo, involves children in making things, provide them the materials.

5. With ads involving math: "Save 9¢, buy for 34¢," assist your child in math by computing related figures.

6. During commercial breaks, discuss emerging plots to help your child become a more discriminating viewer.

7. Provide games, puzzles, books, etc. to encourage participation in alternative activities.

8. Ask your child to critique a program, discussing its good and bad points.

9. Ask your child to retell or rewrite a program in his own words.

10. Help your child track down his own "roots." (Perform activities that are an outgrowth of a TV program.)

11. Ask your child to develop a Saturday morning cartoon involving family members.

12. Involve your child in maintaining a log of what he views with a short summary and critique of the program.

13. Help your child classify the programs he watches (news, fiction, comedy, etc.) as an initial step in achieving balanced viewing.

14. Help your child maintain a schedule of his time for one month recording all activities. Discuss excesses. Follow this with the development of a month-long plan for television viewing to be followed--a mini "TV Guide."

15. Acquire an inexpensive world map or globe. While watching the news together, ask your child to locate the news source.

16. Ask your child to record the long-range weather forecasts, making his own predictions, and record weather as it occurs to become sensitive to forecasting and causes of weather changes.

17. Prior to viewing a program, select a particular sound to be observed. Ask your child to write down uses of the sound.

18. Ask your child to write or tell an appropriate sequel to a program.

19. Encourage your child to create a new character for a favorite program, e.g., new Muppet, a new Charlie's Angel. Justify the character.

20. Have your child create a part for himself on one of his favorite shows and discuss ways his personality strengths might be reflected.

21. Encourage your child to create a television commercial for a favorite product.

23. Discuss the significance of sound effects for cartoons by turning off the sound. Discuss the world of the deaf person.

24. Using "heroes" (Batman, Wonder Woman, etc.) from television programs as discussion starters, discuss heroic traits, how individuals may acquire heroic traits, how to distinguish fact from fantasy, safety problems when emulating heroes, etc.

25. After obtaining a schedule of movies to be broadcast on television, select one that is based on a child's book, e.g., Treasure Island. Ask your child to read the book. Discuss variations between the book and the movie.

26. Maintain an expanding dictionary of unfamiliar words the child hears on television, look the word up and add to the list. Reward entries.

27. Test with your child the validity of advertisements.

CHAPTER III

TACKLING SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Gifted children sometimes have problems which require special parental skills to resolve. The most common of these problems, according to surveys, are:

STRESS: "My child is constantly under stress and I'm afraid I may be part of the problem."

SENSE OF HUMOR: "My child is too serious and is unable to laugh at himself."

LISTENING: "My child does not know how to listen. How can I be a good model?"

IMAGINATION: "My child is good at memorizing but is poor in being able to develop original ideas."

MOTIVATION: "My child has good ability but is not motivated to do his/her best."

PERFECTIONISM: "My child establishes unrealistic standards and, although very bright, sees himself as a failure."

NEGATIVISM: "My child is overly critical of others."

TIME-MANAGEMENT: "I never seem to have enough time to spend with my child."

DECISION-MAKING/GOAL-SETTING: "My child has many interests, but can never seem to make up his mind.

RELAXATION: "My child does not know how to relax and have fun."

The following articles cut across the above topics and provide ideas and activities for you as parents to think about and experiment with as you become more closely involved with gifted children.

STRESS

AN INVENTORY FOR PARENTS*

Introduction

...A 14-year old girl learns that her parents are getting a divorce ...A 15-year old track star receives a first place award for his efforts in a track meet ...A young boy approaches a girl to ask her out for the first time ...A high school senior learns that she will be moving away from her friends of many years ...A 15-year old boy has just learned that he has gotten the lead in the school play ...What do all these people and situations have in common? STRESS! It doesn't matter whether the situation is pleasant or unpleasant. What is significant is the intensity it places on the person to readjust. These incidents are called "stressors."

Children, especially adolescents, are confronted with many stressors as they cope with the changes and demands of life. The numerous personal changes occurring in their growth and development, compounded by current social pressures and upheavals, have created problems that many young persons cannot satisfactorily resolve as evidenced by the increase of adolescent suicides, incidence of drug abuse, underachievement, etc. What is a parent to do?!

Stress can be useful if it results in positive and productive action -- or, if excessively prolonged, it can be destructive and it may result in poor physical or psychological health. Stress cannot be avoided: choices must be made; risks must be taken; persons feel trapped; situations appear hopeless; approval is sought and disapproval is received! Many children have not developed the inner resources to respond adequately to stress and need parental support and guidance. What is a parent to do?!

This abbreviated inventory is designed to help parents recognize possible symptoms and signs of stress in their child, identify possible causes, and suggest possible responses to assist him/her to deal with stress.

In completing the Inventory, place a check beside the symptoms/signs which you suspect are indicators of problems for your child and place a check beside probable causes. In the Responses section, use the numbers from 1 to 5: 1=Little, 5=Much. (It is, of course, impossible to identify conclusively specific symptoms and causes of stress for individuals as each of us responds uniquely to the changes and demands of life. Nevertheless, by systematically reflecting on each item, specific concerns may be identified for parental response which otherwise might be overlooked.) When symptoms are pronounced or prolonged, professional assistance is desirable and should be considered in areas to which parents may be unable to respond, e.g., chemical imbalance.

*This is an article by Donald G. Hayes and Michael Levitt, published in G/C/T magazine, Sept./Oct. 1982.

Symptoms/Signs
Does Your Child Exhibit...

Physical Symptoms of Stress?

__Headaches
__Stomachaches
__Fatigue
__Backaches
__Appetite changes
__Vague physical complaints

Scholastic Symptoms of Stress?

__Drop in Grades
__Loss in concentration and memory

An Unusual Activity level?

__Decrease in mental/physical energy
__Withdrawal from usual activities
__Increased; purposeless, non-goal directed

Social Symptoms of Stress?

__Withdrawal
__Overinvolvement
__

Shifts in Feelings?
__Mood change (moodiness, irritability, ill-tempered, sadness, boredom, depression)
__Elation without reason

Sleep Disorders?
__Too much sleep; sleep at unusual times
__Can't fall asleep
__Early awakening

Specific Symptoms such as...
__Fears
__Worry
__Oversensitiveness
__Nightmares
__Suicide thoughts
__Temper tantrums
__Lying
__Stealing
__Bedwetting
__Nail-biting
__Aggressiveness
__Evidence of drug abuse
__Irrational arguments
__Low self-esteem
__Running away

Causes - Does Your Child Feel Anxious
Because Of:

Non-Acceptance?
__From peers
__From parents
__From others
__From self (appearance,
__abilities)

(The Superman/
Wonder Woman Urge)
__From peers
__From parents
__From others
__From self

Competition?
__With peers
__With siblings
__With parents
__With fantasy heroes
__In sports
__In school work Expectations of
__ Perfection?

Specific problem areas?
__Burnout
__Death
__Divorce
__Diet
__Chemical imbalance
__Moves
__Money
__Heterosexual relationships
__New family member

Responses
To What Extent Do You....

_help your child develop self-esteem, e.g., praising, minimizing his/her fear of failure, avoiding "put down" statements?
_help your child develop empathy and trust, encouraging him/her to share feelings and to display affection?
_help your child learn to make choices and decisions, e.g., discussing alternative behaviors to routine dilemmas?
_help your child identify ways to take control of his/her life, e.g., developing goals and strategies for their achievement?
_share time and activities together?
_maintain consistency in expectations and relationships?
_encourage your child to talk out his/her worries with someone and do you listen if and when your child chooses to talk out his/her worries with you.
_help your child learn to do something for others?
_help your child get enough sleep and rest?
_help your child maintain a good diet and appropriate eating habits?
_help your child learn how to relax - to enjoy quiet, "do-nothing" occasions?
_model a sense of humor and laugh with your child?
_help your child learn to say "no" and, when appropriate, to be assertive?
_help your child develop the "courage to be imperfect" - to understand and accept his/her limits and learn to accept failures?
_help your child identify the "stresses" in his/her life, talk about them, and take appropriate action whenever possible?
_help your child balance work and recreation and develop positive "addictions" (hobbies, sports, etc.)?
_help your child look at his/her problem from another perspective?
_allow the expression of feelings?
_discuss with your child that some of life's problems do not have quick, easy solutions and that he/she must learn to accept what cannot be changed?
_attempt to live through your child, e.g., expect him/her to do what you have done or to achieve what you have failed to achieve - or to be the person you wanted to be?
_leave your child alone when appropriate?
_"give in" when appropriate?
_your own problems get in the way of recognizing those your child may be experiencing?
_seek professional help in determining his/her physical and psychological well-being?

This Responses list is included to suggest the critical role of parents in helping their child develop the resources to resolve the stresses with which (s)he confronts. Has a review of this list helped you to determine whether you may be contributing to the problem? If so, are you willing to alter your behavior?

Although it is difficult for parents to know what they can or ought to do to minimize stress for their child or how they should respond when symptoms of stress are evident, three guidelines are suggested: 1) AWARENESS - being sensitive to possible causes and symptoms of stress, 2) RESPONSIVENESS - being willing to make an objective self-assessment to determine whether you may be contributing to the problem by what you are doing - or not doing, 3) PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE - being willing, when a problem is pronounced or persists in spite of your best efforts, to seek professional help, e.g., talking with a teacher or counselor, obtaining a thorough physical or psychological check-up for your child, or involving him/her in therapy.

Professional Assistance

Some parents may be reluctant - for a variety of reasons - to seek professional help for their child. Aside from psychotherapy which may be necessary in serious cases, different procedures requiring parental cooperation may be prescribed for particular stress symptoms. The chart which follows includes illustrative examples of stress symptoms and some possible behavioral techniques which might be employed to alleviate the symptoms. (Parents may wish to consult a professional for an explanation of the techniques.) This chart is provided to indicate that, even when professional assistance is sought, a supportive home environment with parents working as partners with the professional is necessary if the child's problem is to be resolved.

General Ideas for Responding to Stress

There are no simple or universally effective solutions to the problem of stress reduction and management. We are all unique, and what works well for some of us may be totally ineffective for others. However, each of the ideas and techniques that follows represents an approach that has worked well for someone somewhere; some of them, at least, may be effective for you, also. One should add to this list whenever he/she can.

- Become knowledgeable about stress. Understand the process and the effects of stress. Learn to identify your own major sources of stress. Anticipate those stressful periods of life and plan for them ahead of time. Develop a repertoire of successful stress-management techniques and practice them routinely. Look for the opportunities for personal growth inherent in each and every period of stress. Find what level of stress is best for you, remembering that both insufficient and excessive stress are potentially harmful.

- Take a systematic approach to all problem-solving. Define your problem specifically; look beyond symptoms. Break it down into manageable components that can each be dealt with more easily. Gather sufficient information about each problem so that you may see it in perspective. Look into why the problem exists for yourself. Review your experience with your current problem or situation and similar ones. Look into all alternative courses of action. Then select one course of action and proceed directly with it.

- Learn to come to terms with your feelings. Recognize the differences between your thoughts and your feelings. Do not suppress your feelings; acknowledge them to yourself, and share them with others. Learn that flexibility and the ability to be adaptive create a sense of wellness. Be honest with yourself as to what your personal abilities and liabilities are. Most of all accept your feelings.

- Develop effective behavioral skills. Do not use the word "can't" when you actually mean "won't"; for example, "I can't stop smoking." When you have determined what needs to be done with your life, act on those decisions. Use your time productively, especially free time. Be assertive. When there are conflicts, manage them in an open and direct fashion. Avoid blaming others for situations. Provide positive feedback to other people. Learn that saying "no" can be a healthy response for both you and others. Learn to deal with problems as they appear because procrastination often leads to intensification of an initially simple problem. Look realistically at your expectations, avoiding both grandiose and catastrophic ones. Learn to back off from stressful situations and take breaks.

- Establish and maintain a strong support network. Feel free to ask for direct help and be able to accept it when it is offered. Develop a sense of empathy for others. Be honest in your assessment of your own needs for support and your satisfaction with the support you presently receive. Make a list of six people with whom you would like to improve your relationship and in each case identify one action step that you could take toward such an improvement. Look into ridding yourself of damaging relationships. Maintain high quality relationships both on and off the job, at home or in school.

- Develop the type of life-style that will prevent and buffer the effects of stress. Regularly and routinely practice some form of each of the following types of exercise: vigorous, stretching, and recreational. Engage regularly in some form of systematic relaxation.

  Obtain sufficient rest on a regular basis. Maintain your recommended weight. Eat a balanced diet, avoiding caffeine, foods high in sugar, salt, white flour, saturated fats and chemicals. Seek out variety and maintain the change of pace to your life-style. Maintain an optimistic attitude. Do not dwell upon unimportant matters.

- Concentrate on positive spiritual as well as physical development. Begin to adopt an attitude that no problem is too monumental to be solved. Engage regularly in some form of prayer or meditation. Establish a sense of purpose and direction. Believe in yourself. Increase your awareness of the inter-dependence of all things in the universe.

- Finally, plan and execute successful life-style changes. Expect to succeed. Approach projects one step at a time. Practice each change rigorously for a period of time and decide whether to continue with it. When you are successful celebrate your successes and reward yourself.

TECHNIQUES

SPECIFIC — GENERAL

SYMPTOMS (Illustrative Examples)	Autonomic Change					Behavior Change		Cognitive Change		Perceptual Change			Psycho-therapy
	Bio-feed back	Autogenics (the use of key phrases to induce relaxation	Self-hypnosis	Breathing	Progressive Relaxation	Assertiveness Training	Coping Skills Training	Refuting Irrational Ideas	Thought Stopping (thinking about things in different ways)	Imagination	Meditation	Time Management	
Bodily - Headaches	X	X	X	X	X					X	X		
Activity - Withdrawal					X	X	X	X	X				
Feelings - Mood Change					X			X	X			X	
School - Drop in Grades			X		X				X	X		X	
Social - Overinvolvement					X		X					X	
Sleep - Can't fall asleep			X	X	X				X			X	
Anxiety - fears, worry, over sensitiveness nightmares		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				
Acting Out - temper, lying, stealing, aggressiveness, running away					X	X	X	X	X		X		
Personal Habits - bedwetting, nail biting					X								
Personality Change, Drug abuse, Irrational, Low self-esteem					X	X	X	X	X	X	X		

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DEVELOPING A SENSE OF HUMOR
...Send In The Clowns

INTRODUCTION

"We who laugh - last!" A sense of humor, while universally acknowledged as one of the most desirable human characteristics, is lacking in many persons. This is regrettable since the use of humor is one of the most effective ways to satisfy three basic needs: Self-Esteem, Security, and Pleasure.

SELF-ESTEEM: Recognizing our imperfections and the danger of taking ourselves too seriously, we can learn to laugh at ourselves. Humor is a way for us to accept ourselves as we really are.

SECURITY (Don Quixote Syndrome): Our need for security and order is threatened when we sense that something is distorted and not what it seems to be (incongruent) - such as pomp, hypocrisy, conceit, and contradictions - and we expose it (or attack it) in socially acceptable says, e.g., satire, irony, parody, caricature, hyperbole, puns. By "setting things straight", and, thus, bringing order out of paradox, humor relieves tension and helps us relax. We seem to enjoy and gain some comic relief when "the bubble is burst." Laughter may be our way of saying, "You didn't fool me" or "You got what you deserved" or a vicarious way to put persons with unacceptable behavior "in their place." As a form of self-acceptance, and as a "social corrective," humor, then, is an important coping technique - our "defense against the world." The relationship between order and humor may also be observed in the fact that it is the unexpected that is amusing, e.g., Mr. T. in a tu tu, a bald Howard Cosell, wordplay. (A joke is not funny if we know the punch line!)

PLEASURE: Humor helps us to make "lemonade out of life's lemons" and, thus makes life more tolerable.

If humor is so prized, why is it in short supply? Many persons are taught that "life is no laughing matter" (Protestant Ethnic) and, therefore, laughter is wrong - or they are too short-sighted to recognize that the use of humor makes us less vulnerable - not more so. Others, tragically, may recognize the validity of humor but are too up-tight to be able to use it.

HOW IT CAN BE DEVELOPED

Guidelines: Peter and Dana in The Laughter Description suggest eight guidelines for the development of a sense of humor:

1. Adopt an attitude of playfulness. This does not mean that you will do outrageous things, but that your mind is open to uncensored, iconoclastic, silly, or outrageous thoughts.

2. Think funny. See the funny side or flip side of every situation. Select and refine your outrageous thoughts that best expose our conceits, pomposities, and incongruities.

3. Laugh at the incongruities in situations involving yourself and others.

4. Only laugh with others for what they do rather than for what they are, unless you are assured that they can laugh at themselves for what they are. In laughing with others about their incongruities, see them as mirrors in which your own weaknesses, idiosyncrasies, and conceits are reflected.

5. Laugh at yourself, not in derision, but with objectivity and acceptance of self.

6. Take yourself lightly. Take your job and your responsibilities to yourself and others seriously. You will discover that this will make life's anxieties and burdens lighter.

7. Make others laugh. By creating happiness for others, you will experience a special joy of accomplishment that only a lively, generous sense of humor can bring.

8. Realize that a sense of humor is deeper than laughter and more satisfactory than comedy, and delivers greater rewards than merely being entertaining. A sense of humor sees the fun in everyday experiences. It is more important to have fun than to be funny.

DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES: Individuals who desire to develop a better sense of humor can approach the task in three separate but connected ways: 1) Acquire a new perspective of themselves, 2) Gain a better understanding of the art of humor, 3) Practice thinking funny.

UNDERSTANDING SELF: An important characteristic of maturity and the integrated/authentic personality is the ability to recognize our limitations - and learning to accept them by being able to laugh at them.

Recall Embarrassing Moments, Foibles, Faux Pas, Snafus, Bloopers: How did you respond when you: lost your bathing suit in the swimming pool; walked into the wrong bathroom or into a glass door; showed up for a dinner engagement a day late; asked someone "When is the baby due?" and she says "I'm not pregnant!"; were singing or talking vigorously to yourself and realized you were being observed; in the presence of a VIP you realized that your zipper was down or that you had a split in your clothing in a very awkward location; couldn't remember a close friend's name when introducing her; started to pay the restaurant check and realized you had no money; missed the chair; stepped in it; stomach growled; sang the wrong note, unsuccessfully attempted to skate/ski...

Idiosyncrasies: List them. Imagine how you might "roast" yourself.

Positive Self-Image: List your positive traits, successes, blessings, enjoyable/humorous experiences, etc. and carry this ever-expanding list with you as a reminder that you're okay.

UNDERSTANDING HUMOR:

Collections: Begin a variety of collections: jokes, "kids say the darnest things", cartoons, bumper stickers, limericks, puns, riddles, good literary

examples of satire, irony, caricature, parody (note the extensive use of word play!)

Comparing Styles: Compare and contrast different comedians, cartoonists, and humorists, e.g., Mark Twain, Will Rogers, Art Buchwald, Erma Bombeck.

Universality: Attempt to identify timeless characteristics and cross-cultural similarities of humor, e.g., exaggerated stereotypes, incongruities.

PRACTICE THINKING FUNNY:

Imagination: Develop the skill to observe and/or create paradoxes/incongruities, e.g., pious bigots, a conceited colleague-nude, a local bully-emaciated and toothless, a flat-chested Dolly Parton, a boring meeting-that begins to swing in unusual ways, a toothless Jimmy Carter, a pregnant man, Brooke Shields-with no eyebrows, your go-go dancing mother.

Were you There: Rewrite historical events, altering the circumstances and persons involved, e.g., Japanese drop rotten eggs at Pearl Harbor, Steve Martin/Joan Rivers elected President.

Rewriting Aphroisms: Merrill Harmin (Argus Communications) suggests the practice of rewriting familiar statements: You can lead a horse to water but the real trick is to get him to lie on his back and float; Show me a home where the buffalo roam and I'll show you a house with a messy kitchen.

Practical Jokes: Plan some wild and crazy practical jokes on your friends (or enemies) - even if you don't do them.

Stop, Look and Listen: Take the time to become more observant of the "fun" things all around us, e.g., carefree children or pups at play, persons walking through the mall, persons trying to be something they are not, the human characteristics of animals and the animal characteristics (scratching of humans, barnyard sounds, the way persons laugh...

Relax: Develop the ability to relax, e.g., breathing exercises, meditation - and take the time to listen to silence or music.

Have You Heard the One: Develop the habit of memorizing and telling one new joke a day/week.

Wordplay: Develop the skill of creating wordplay, e.g., limericks and puns.

Associations: Identify one or more persons with a good sense of humor. Cultivate their friendship and association.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT

1. God gave us imaginations to compensate for what we aren't, and a sense of humor to console us for what we are.

PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION - LISTENING SKILLS

INTRODUCTION

Although much of what we learn comes from what we hear, most people are inefficient (25%) listeners. Many parents forget that communication is a mutual sharing of ideas and feelings and that a two-way process must occur for understanding and effective parent-child relationships. Bill Wagonseller in The Art of Parenting has outlined four guidelines for good communication in the home: 1) Be Supportive - using words and actions to show the child you care about him and what he has to say; 2) Set A Good Example - "Listen to others as you would have them listen to you." 3) Listening - stopping what you are doing to give the child your full attention, e.g., eye contact, leaning closer; 4) Repeating Key Ideas - restating what the child is saying to let him know you are listening and that you are receiving the intended message.

Tips For Better Listening (Parents, rate yourselves on the following items)

1. Think about what is being said.
2. Clarify to the listener the purpose of what is being said.
3. Listen for important clues of "hidden" messages.
4. Look for common areas of agreement when listening.
5. Look for the general message or theme - not simply isolated facts.
6. Eliminate distractions.
7. Don't interrupt.
8. Establish eye contact. Look at the speaker - not past him.
9. Provide non-verbal reinforcement to the listener, e.g., eye contact, nodding, smiling, repeating what has been said, asking clarifying questions.
10. Set aside special times just for talking and listening.
11. Talk with - not to - each other.
12. Analyze the cause for poor listening - and the consequences.

Home Learning Activities

The following are some selected listening skills students in the public schools of North Carolina are expected to acquire and some home learning activities involving the parent and child that may help to develop the skills.

A. Distinguishing between and among sounds

1. Take a nature walk with your child, listening for different sounds of birds, insects, etc. - Back home, take turns duplicating the sound with the other guessing the sound.

2. Practice tongue-twisters to improve speaking and listening.

3. Record each family member's voice. Ask child to identify the voices and to describe differences among the voices.

4. Sing notes that are high, low, long, trilly, etc. and ask the child to pantomime the note. Reverse roles.

5. Teach the child a nonsense song with made-up words.

6. Play a record with sounds of different instruments. Ask the child to identify the instruments when they are played.

7. Pronounce a series of words with different syllables with the child guessing the number of syllables.

8. As a family, listen to music and move to its rhythm.

B. Recognizing main ideas, comparisons/contrasts, and cause-effect relationships

1. Give the child a series of oral directions, asking him to perform the tasks in sequence.

2. Read a recipe to the child to determine if he can follow directions in preparing a simple dish.

3. Read a short story to the child and ask him some who, what, where questions about the story. Ask him to describe differences between two characters in the story. Identify the main idea.

4. Treasure Hunt - Give the child a series of verbal instructions to find a hidden object.

5. Read a poem with figurative language. Ask the child for its meaning.

6. Ask your child to identify the most important sentence in each of a series of paragraphs.

C. Learning to interpret, predicting outcomes, classifying, and summarizing

1. Read the first half of a story and ask the child to predict the outcome.

2. After reading a story to the child, ask him to suggest alternative endings - or summarize the story.

D. Learning to listen critically for fact, opinion, assumption, propaganda

1. Read an advertisement to the child and ask your child to tell you which parts are fact or opinion.

2. Read together the "Letters to the Editor." Evaluate the accuracy of the letters.

E. Learning to listen critically in order to draw conclusions and make judgments

1. Take turns sharing with your child the day's activities. Guess which activity each enjoyed best.

2. Give the child a series of messages to give to different family members. The child must guess who gets each message and correctly deliver it.

3. After listening to a newscast, ask your child how the events may directly or indirectly affect him.

4. After reading or watching a cartoon, ask your child to tell you why something was funny.

5. Cut five articles and their headlines from a newspaper. Ask your child to match the correct headline with each article.

F. Learning to listen creatively in order to formulate new ideas

1. After putting an object into a bag, the child listens to spoken clues to guess the identity of the object.

2. During a thunderstorm, ask your child how the sounds affect his feelings. Use the occasion to explain the causes and effects of thunder. Play a game, using the thunder for sound effects.

BE A GOOD MODEL

IMAGINATION: THE OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

"WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR"
AH, SWEET MYSTERY OF LIFE"

INTRODUCTION

Teachers and parents can do much to help young persons develop their imagination, especially by asking open-ended questions that cause them to think about things in unusual ways or to think about things they don't normally think about. Examples follow:

SELF - WHAT IF I

- were a X (animal, road sign, etc.)
- were 3 feet/30 feet tall - were invisible - were of the opposite sex (both male and female)
- lost the sense of touch/smell/sight/hearing/feeling/movement
- could not talk
- had x-ray vision/knew what others were thinking
- no one died
- lived alone on an island/was the only person in the world
- had a clone/all persons looked alike
- could breathe under water
- could talk to animals
- could reshape my body as if it were clay
- could fly in space at the speed of light
- were of a different race
- had the skin of an alligator/fur of a dog
- could use my feet as well as my hands
- parents removed children from the home at age 10/16
- had webbed feet and a long tail
- never needed sleep
- were retarded/a genius
- my sight/hearing/strength were increased 100 times
- could eat nothing but spinach

FANTASY/FUTURE - I WONDER -

- what it would be like to live in X fairy tale
- what life will be like in the 23rd century
- what babies dream about
- if it is possible to eliminate traits of violence
- if family groups were destroyed
- if women ran the world
- if I were a slave/could have my own slave
- if insects were as large as people
- if people married objects instead of people
- what I would say if I could talk with a deceased person (Aristotle, Ben Franklin, etc.)
- if there is life on other planets/what it looks like
- what it would be like to be X (hero, heroine)
- if water covered the earth
- could live to be 1000
- persons never forgot anything/had no memory
- there were no colors
- what smells look like
- if there is a Loch Ness monster
- if my spouse and I were chosen to begin life on another planet
- if I had a magic carpet
- if I had three wishes
- if I lived in the age of dinosaurs, King Arthur, etc.
- all persons spoke the same language
- what causes people to fall in love/to hate each other

HISTORICAL - WHAT IF

- the United States had been settled originally on the West Coast
- we had lost World War II
- all the land was returned to the Indians
- X had not been developed/discovered (auto, television, wheel, alcohol, penicillin)
- persons were nomads
- A. Lincoln, J. Kennedy, had not been assassinated
- everyone had the same amount of money
- I could take X's (historical figure) place for one day
- a woman were president and she became pregnant
- the Lost Colony was found

SCIENCE - I WONDER

- how electricity works
- how life begins
- we could not store food
- if there was no gravity
- how we will evolve
- when and how we will begin to establish colonies on other planets
- if we learned the earth is to be destroyed in one week
- if we had no number system
- if knowledge can be transmitted electronically to our brains
- how oak trees can grow from acorns
- what growing would sound like if we could hear it
- insects could not be eradicated
- where space ends/what's on the other side
- persons could be transmitted electronically
- if and how we can eliminate sickness
- how we could reduce the world's population
- what would happen if there is a nuclear war
- if seasons did not follow a cycle

SPIRITUAL - I WONDER

- if there is a God - what she/he looks like -...if there is life after death...
- if and when Jesus will return...what heaven/hell is like...what I could do forever...
- if there are angels/devils and what they are like...if animals experience life after death...if families are together in heaven...if I have a soul...what goodness is...what is the best way to make people happy...when the world will end...if I'll return as (someone, something) else...if Jesus had not been born...if God is watching me...if I'll recognize my relatives and friends in heaven...if God gets mad....

WHAT IS YOUR FANTASY? WHAT ARE YOUR DREAMS?
WHAT DO YOU WONDER ABOUT?

BE A GOOD MODEL!!!

Note: We must develop our imagination and sense of wonder...and we must know when to return to the world of reality and learn how to live in it.

A RATING SCALE FOR PARENTS

MOTIVATION AND DISCIPLINE*

This rating scale includes ten important principles of motivation and discipline. Its use by parents may be helpful in identifying more effective ways to motivate and discipline their children. In rating, use the numbers from 1 to 5: 1=ineffective, 5=effective. (If individual items are scored, average the results.)

Rating

___1. SELF-ESTEEM. MOST BEHAVIOR REFLECTS A NEED FOR SELF-ESTEEM AND A FEELING OF PERSONAL ADEQUACY. How effectively do you: create realistic expectations ___, recognize the importance of experiencing success in the completion of tasks ___, let your child know he's needed and appreciated ___, avoid sibling comparisons ___, avoid embarrassing ___, minimize your child's fear of failure ___?

___2. EMPATHY. TRUST AND ACCEPTANCE ENCOURAGE ACHIEVEMENT. How effectively do you: provide a climate for mutual sharing of feelings ___, recognize that acceptance is reciprocal (two-way) ___, maintain a sense of humor ___, display affection ___, avoid "snap" judgments ___, set a good example ___?

___3. SELF-DISCIPLINE. PERSONS DESIRE AND NEED AUTONOMY. How effectively do you: help your child develop self-discipline by giving him increasing responsibilities and decision-making powers ___, help your child develop a balanced schedule of his time___? (The goal of discipline should be self-discipline.)

___4. CONSISTENCY. PERSONS NEED LIMITS AND AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THEM. How effectively do you: establish reasonable and clear expectations and consistently enforce them (however, flexible when justified) ___, avoid prolonging the acceptance of unacceptable behavior ___?

___5. REWARDS. BEHAVIORS WHICH ARE REWARDED (REINFORCED) ARE MOST LIKELY TO RECUR. How effectively do you: praise, praise, praise (Indiscriminate praise is detrimental. To be connected, rewards must follow almost immediately after the desired behavior.)

___6. GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS. LEARNERS PROGRESS AS FAR AS THEY NEED TO IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THEIR PURPOSES. How effectively do you: know your child's interests and needs ___, involve your child in establishing goals and expectations ___, maintain interest in his/her interests ___?

*Written by Donald G. Hayes, published in G/C/T magazine, Sept./Oct. 1983.

___7. READINESS. ATTEMPTS TO TEACH SOMETHING A PERSON IS NOT READY TO LEARN CREATES FRUSTRATION AND INTERFERES WITH LATER LEARNING. How effectively do you: establish expectations appropriate to your child's maturity? (Treating children "alike" may not be desirable or fair.)

___8. VALUES. VALUES CANNOT BE IMPOSED. How effectively do you: take the time to help your child clarify his/her values - discussing alternatives to and consequences of different behaviors ___, serve as a good model ___?

___9. LISTENING. LISTENING FACILITATES UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE. How effectively do you: make an effort to listen, e.g., minimize distractions ___, establish eye contact ___, avoid interrupting ___, set aside special times for one-on-one talking and listening___?

___10. CAUSES. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR IS A SYMPTOM. How effectively do you: attempt to discover and treat the causes of the inappropriate behavior?

BE A GOOD MODEL

After reviewing your ratings:

1. What do you feel are your primary strengths in motivating/disciplining your child?

2. What advice would you give other parents who would like to develop similar strengths?

3. List three things you plan to do to improve your efforts to motivate/discipline your child.

WINNERS AND LOSERS: THE COMPETITION PROBLEM
"I'm Not O.K. - I'm Not a '10'"

PROBLEM

Many young persons, including the highly gifted, see themselves as losers because they have been taught to believe they must always win!

INTRODUCTION

Suicides involving youth have doubled in the past decade. This and other alarming statistics describing the increasing incidence of undesirable behavior by young persons, e.g., aggression, perfectionism, unhappiness, are causing many parents and teachers to be concerned about what they might do to resolve this problem. Reflecting a wedding of the theories of Martin Buber and William Glasser, it is proposed that those with responsibilities for child development, especially parents and teachers, consider two important areas: (1) the quality of the relationship they have with their child/students; and (2) how well they are teaching young persons to make choices.

I and Thou

The theologian Martin Buber has persuasively described why it is important not to treat others as objects (I-It Relationship) but, rather, to create relationships characterized by mutual respect and sharing, defined by Buber as an I-Thou Relationship.

Reality Therapy

William Glasser, the "father" of reality therapy, classifies human needs into four areas: (1) Belonging and Love, (2) Gaining Worth and Recognition, (3) Having Fun, (4) Being Free. He believes that it is very important for persons to develop confidence that they can resolve problems that get in the way of satisfying needs, that persons realize that they choose almost all of what they do and, therefore, must learn to accept responsibility for their behavior.

COMPETITION VERSUS COOPERATION

Some persons view life as a constant "battle" with others and feel that they must do better than the other person to acquire the recognition, acceptance, or self-esteem they need. Similarly, some persons are perfectionists with an excessive fear of failure and, as a result, place unrealistic expectations on themselves to be NUMBER ONE in all endeavors. This need to "win" can cause problems in working cooperatively as such persons tend to be defensive or intolerant of the limitations of others--and themselves.

When persons view others as rivals/adversaries, they are likely to have problems in developing trusting relationships and in resolving conflicts. They tend to be unwilling to take risks, do not enjoy life, do not know how to relax, and have illogical fears.

The fact that there are many such "Type A" persons in our society, even among the young as reflected by increasing stress-related problems, results, in part, from our culture's traditional valuing of individualism and

achievement-orientation. However, higher productivity does not necessarily result from practices reflecting the values. Parents and teachers are guilty of enhancing stress over achievement when they:

- Make comparisons: "Your brother/friend did better than you." (This conveys that affirmation comes with winning.)
- Make excessive demands: "You can do better. You can make all A's if you try. You can be the best."
- Play only those games which stress competition: winning-losing.
- Love conditionally: infrequently and reluctantly displaying affection or giving praise.

Competition is a fact of life and, consequently, persons must learn to compete and, also, to do his/her best. However, recognizing that excessive or otherwise harmful competition is also a reality and that some persons have not learned to compete responsibly, parents and teachers should provide many non-competitive experiences for young persons so that they may also learn how to cooperate: to play with others--not against others and learn that activities involving more than one person need not be at the expense of someone, and that fun and enjoyment ought to characterize play. Somehow, parents and teachers must learn how to instill in young persons both a strong commitment to excellence and, at the same time, a recognition and acceptance of their limitations, including the ability to set realistic goals.

SOLUTIONS

Developing Relationships

When the quality of the relationship between parent/teacher and child reflects mutual respect and sharing, it is characterized by a willingness to share time together, openness, and affirmation. This creates a relationship to nurture a climate within which the child's needs may be met.

Need: Belonging and Love. Some young persons see themselves as misfits/-outsiders and, fearing rejection, insulate themselves and are unable to achieve intimacy with others. To address this problem, parents and teachers might encourage such youth to:

- Develop the skill of cooperation.*
- Systematically work on developing friendships and loving relationships (family, friends, pets).
- Identify his/her talents and specific ways they might be shared (do something for others).
- Clarify and communicate feelings and aspirations.
- List and discuss ways all persons are interdependent.

(The activities in this and the following lists are not intended exclusively for persons with problems. They are excellent preventive measures.)

Need: Gaining Worth and Recognition. Some of our youth, perhaps because of expectations of perfection, see themselves as failures. They may feel that they do not receive sufficient support, affirmation, and acceptance. It is important to help such persons:

- Discuss their successes and failures and resulting feelings.
- Identify some "risks" they would like to take and some attainable and measurable steps to be taken for their achievement.
- Describe their fears.
- Develop an accurate Personal Profile.
- Participate in service projects.
- Initiate a systematic plan to recognize acquaintances for their achievements (It is reciprocal!).
- Lower expectations of recognition by others.
- Appreciate intrinsic rewards.

Need: Having Fun. Some persons, believing that life is "no laughing matter," take themselves too seriously and, thus, are unable to laugh/relax/have fun. Such persons may be insecure and believe they must "prove" themselves through "serious" activities to gain acceptance. Possible solutions include:

- Practice observing the "fun" things around us, e.g., children and animals at play, sounds, the way people walk or sing.
- Set aside time for quiet, "do-nothing" occasions (unfocused time).
- Develop the skill to observe and/or create paradoxes/incongruities, e.g., bald Howard Cosell, flat-chested Dolly Parton).
- Identify a hobby you would like to develop.
- Keep learning: greatest source of fun.
- Engage in wordplay.

Need: Being Free. Persons feel trapped because they have too many real or imagined obligations and are reluctant to share or drop them. Feeling overwhelmed or helpless, they may give up. Possible aid to such persons:

- After identifying the activities that occupy time, divide the list into several groups (musts, desirable, unnecessary/undesirable). Intentionally stop doing some of them. Specifically, say "NO" to some requests.
- Identify creative and desirable ways one's responsibilities/"burdens" might be shared.
- Seek out people and situations that allow freedom to be yourself.
- Take advantage of opportunities for personal growth.

Summary. Parents and teachers who are concerned about the behavior of a child/student should first assess the quality of the relationship they have with the young person to determine if it is characterized by mutual respect and sharing. (This is more productive than "blaming" others.) Next, the young persons must be convinced that the choices they make will largely determine how well their needs will be met and, ultimately, their enjoyment of life.

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* Read Terry Orlick's The Cooperative Sports and Games Book: Challenge Without Competition.

TECHNIQUES TO DEVELOP NON-VIOLENT BEHAVIOR

Introduction

"Winners and Losers: The Competition Problem" describes how many practices by teachers and parents promote aggressive behaviors by children and outlines some general principles which, if implemented, will likely result in less violent behavior. This supplement outlines additional specific ways parents and teachers can help develop skills of cooperation.

Sharing/Responsibility

1. After identifying with the child specific ways his/her time, talents, and resources might be shared, promote participation in these activities, e.g., clothing and toys to GoodWill, church contributions, a neighbor's needs, paper drives, scouting, candy strippers.

2. Assign specific tasks the young person has a responsibility to complete.

3. When someone damages another's property, insist on restitution.

4. Identify specific ways in which the child can be involved in making decisions about matters which concern him/her.

5. Involve a young person in being a Big Brother/Big Sister to a younger person.

6. After distributing a crayon to each member of a group (different colors), involve them in coloring a picture.

7. Develop a "Family Plan" for TV viewing.

8. Implement a variety of projects to be completed by groups, e.g., creating a poem together.

9. After individual talents of group members have been identified, involve each in tutoring the other.

Trust/Interdependence

1. List with the child specific ways we are dependent on others, e.g., garbage collectors, doctors, policemen, and discuss the necessity of trusting others.

2. Identify a series of tasks in which each member of the class/family has a special responsibility for the completion of the task.

3. Discuss historical examples in which individuals/countries joined together to mutually benefit the other.

Conflict Resolution

1. Role play a recent conflict in the home and identify specific communication problems that contributed to the problem. Discuss alternative approaches.

2. At critical moments, engage the child in activities that require considerable energy. When appropriate, do as a class/family.

3. Have each child identify someone they especially admire. Inquire how that person might resolve X conflict.

4. Have a "Time-Out" place for the very angry person.

5. Identify words that are conflict-provoking, e.g., I, mine, stupid.

6. Discuss historical examples of persons who promoted non-violence, e.g., Jesus, Gandhi, King.

Restrictions

T.V. viewing
Diet
Fighting

Rewards and Punishment

1. Corporal punishment is not effective in promoting non-violent behavior.

2. Extrinsic rewards, e.g., money, are acceptable in initially shaping behavior. The objective is that desirable behaviors will eventually become intrinsically satisfying.

3. What constitutes rewards and punishment vary among individuals, e.g., social isolation, recognition.

4. Treating children "alike" may not be desirable or fair.

5. Most behaviors must be rewarded if they are to recur.

Games

Terry Orlick (Pantheon, 1978) has written an excellent book titled The Cooperative Sports and Games Book: Challenge Without Competition. He relates that generally games in Western society have become too rigid, judgmental, highly organized--with no room for fun. The book includes descriptions of alternative kinds of games parents and teachers might teach young persons. Some excerpts follow.

3-7 Year Olds

Cooperative Music Hoops--Groups of 2 stand inside a hula hoop, skipping around the room to music. When music stops, two pairs join together.. process continues until as many children as possible are together.

Partners--After selecting a partner, pairs of children move to music around the room. At a given signal, one person becomes a "mirror" imitating whatever his partner does.

Big Turtle--A group of 7-8 children get on their hands and knees under a large "turtle shell" (blanket, mat) and make the turtle move in one direction.

Big Snake--Children stretch out on the floor holding the ankles of the person in front of them and slither around the room first in groups of two, then four, etc. until the whole group is one Big Snake. Periodically have the snake go over "mountains" (benches) or roll over on its back without coming apart.

Tug of Peace--Using skipping ropes involve various numbers of students in creating shapes, e.g., 3 children creating a triangle by keeping the rope taut at specific points.

Beach-Ball Balance--Two children can hold a beach ball between them without using hands--in many different ways: stomach to stomach, head to head, etc. and then: move around the room, touch toes, etc.

8-12 Year Olds

Hug Tag--A cooperative version of the regular tag game is to make a player safe from being tagged when she is hugging another person.

Human Tangle--While standing in a circle of approximately 10 persons and placing their hands in the center, each person takes the hands of two people other than those immediately next to him. The group then works to untie the knot without releasing handholds.

Collective-Score Blanketball--Two teams use a blanket to toss a beachball back and forth over the volleyball net, collecting a point for each successful toss.

Reverse Score--Each time you score on the other team they get a point (a gift). When a player scores, he switches to the "winning" team. When it's all over, try asking who won.

Remaking Adult Games

Rotational Volleyball--Serve rotates to the other team.
All Touch--Before a person can take a shot, the ball must be touched by all members of a team.
Within-Team Rotation--Each member of a team rotates through the various positions.
Slow Pitch--Pitch until the batter hits the ball.

Other

Three-Legged Race, Relays, Tug-of-War, Pyramid Building, Group Puzzles, Team Sports

DECISION-MAKING/GOAL SETTING

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The gifted child can be under enormous stress related to everyday decisions such as what to wear, whether to participate in cheerleading, band, or football.

In addition, the gifted child has to deal with parental pressure stemming from unrealistic expectations. Parents of A.G. children have a tendency to over-involve their children in too many activities as well as to over-estimate their children's abilities. The natural tendency toward perfectionism may lead parents and children to set goals too high. These children need to learn how to set realistic goals and make realistic decisions based on ability.

POSSIBLE PROBLEM CAUSES

1. Tendency to generalize and extend advanced abilities in intellect to all areas of growth and development--if child is a computer whiz, do you also expect him to be musically talented?

2. Tendency of parent to be ego-involved with the child's achievement--does the child's science fair grade become your grade as well?

3. Child's fear of failure--not working up to potential because he/she might fail.

4. Child's lack of self-confidence.

5. Child's fear of making the wrong choice.

6. Child's lack of ability to specifically set goals--daily and long term.

7. Child's being overwhelmed by the number of things to do--child not knowing where to start with decision-making or goal setting.

POSSIBLE PROBLEM SOLUTIONS

1. Parent should be aware that giftedness is not all-inclusive.

2. Parent should not try to relive life through the child. Child and parent should keep separate identities.

3. Child should be taught a decision-making process which will minimize risk by:

   a. identifying the decision to be made.
   b. gathering information and setting goals.
   c. looking at alternatives.
   d. weighing evidence--pros and cons.
   e. making a tentative decision.
   f. implementing the decision or beginning the process again.

SCENARIO

Formulate an open-ended story in which a decision-making dilemma is presented. Have the child identify all the decisions and their consequences in the story. Lead the child through the step-by-step decision-making process and discuss this with the child.

PARENT HELP QUESTIONNAIRE

The following questionnaire was adapted from Up Your Career by Dean Dauw and published by Waveland Press, Inc. Respond quickly to each item with either a true or false.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DECISION-MAKERS

_____1. I make quiet times by myself to sort things out.

_____2. I recognize signs in myself leading to need for a decision (e.g., excitement, anxiety, frustration, pains in head and/or stomach

_____3. I face difficult decisions head on.

_____4. I act rather than drift and just let things happen.

_____5. I keep up with each small decision as it comes along rather than wait for big ones.

_____6. I set goals.

_____7. I set priorities.

_____8. I do my own thinking rather than constantly ask others for advice.

_____9. I always try to have a back-up plan.

_____10. I like to take time for careful consideration when needed.

_____11. I usually review decisions of long standing to see if they are still valid.

_____12. I feel I can sense when to make quick decisions.

_____13. I prefer to make quick decisions about minor matters.

_____14. I usually face up to letting "the buck stop here."

_____15. I like to see an opportunity in each crisis.

Scoring: If you answered TRUE to more than ten statements you probably make decisions fairly well.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. To what degree do I allow my child to make his/her choices?
2. What are some strategies I could use to help my child make choices?
3. How can I teach my child to accept responsibility for choices I have made?
4. How can I teach my child to use a decision-making process step-by-step?

RELAXATION

Tension and anxiety will always be with us. Every day we face many responsibilities such as raising a family, getting an education, or managing a household. Every experience causes some degree of tension. Sometimes the experience is mild and passes quickly, at other times it is severe and longlasting. Children, as well as adults, experience some tension every day (fitting X number of activities into a given time frame). What causes extreme anxiety in one person may cause only mild anxiety in another. It is important to realize that not everyone needs help in managing anxiety at some time. Also, the need to relax is not unique to our "modern" lifestyle. Various relaxation techniques have been practiced throughout the centuries. Since we are unique individuals we must experiment and find which coping techniques work best for us.

In their book, "Is It Worth Dying For?", Robert S. Eliot and Dennis Le. Breo give these suggestions for dealing with the anxieties we face daily:

1. Clarify your values. It's important to run not on the fast track, but on your track. Pretend you have only six months to live. Make three lists: the things you have to do, want to do, and neither have to do nor want to do. Then, for the rest of your life, forget everything in the third category.

2. Improve your "self-talks." We all talk to ourselves, and many of our self-talks are needlessly negative. Discipline yourself not to overreact emotionally. Why despair when sadness is sufficient? Why be enraged when simple irritation will get your message across?

3. Learn how to relax. All you need is a quiet room. Get comfortable. Then close your eyes, breathe rhythmically (preferably from your abdomen), and blot out distractions for 10 to 15 minutes. Do this twice a day.

4. Exercise regularly. Try to exercise at least three times a week for 20 minutes at 75 percent of your maximum predicted heart rate. To determine that rate, subtract your age from 225 (if you're 40, for example, the rate is 185; 75 percent of that, 139, would be age 40's exercise rate). Make sure your doctor approves, and start gradually.

5. Get the leisure you need. The best way to avoid burnout is to allow yourself proper leisure to renew your commitment to work and recharge your batteries. If you're a workaholic, consider; you owe it to yourself to take time off or else you jeopardize your chances of keeping on top of a rough job over the long haul.

6. Adopt dietary goals. Maintain normal weight. Limit fat to no more than 30 percent of your calories; substitute cereals and breads for fats and sugars; moderate salt intake. Also, remember to eat a real breakfast.

7. Avoid "chemical haze." One definition of stress is loss of control; the need to acquire control through artificial means accounts for the popularity of nicotine, alcohol, caffeine, and drugs. My advice:

   SMOKING--Don't!! Stopping is the single best thing you can do for your health.

DRINKING--Only in moderation!! No more than two drinks a day--preferably beer or wine with meals.
COFFEE--too much can make you jittery, irritable, prone to headaches.
DRUGS--only if prescribed!! Chemicals make you feel you're in control; but you're not. Real control takes effort, not escape.

DISCUSSION

1. How well do you create a relaxed, tension-free atmosphere in the home?

2. Are your leisure time activities stressful?

STRESS TEST (HOW VULNERABLE ARE YOU TO STRESS?)
The following test was developed by Psychologists Lyle H. Miller and Alma Dell Smith at Boston University Medical Center. Score each item from 1 (almost always to 5 (never), according to how much of the time each statement applies to you.

___1. I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.

___2. I get seven or eight hours of sleep at least four nights a week.

___3. I give and receive affection regularly.

___4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.

___5. I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.

___6. I smoke less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.

___7. I take fewer than five alcoholic drinks a week.

___8. I am the appropriate weight for my height.

___9. I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.

___10. I get strength from my religious beliefs.

___11. I regularly attend club or social activities.

___12. I have a network of friends and acquaintances.

___13. I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.

___14. I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, teeth).

___15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.

___16. I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems, e.g., chores, money, and daily living issues.

___17. I do something for fun at least once a week.

___18. I am able to organize my time effectively.

___19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee, tea, or cola drinks a day.

___20. I take quiet time for myself during the day.

TOTAL-To get your score, add up the figures and subtract 20. Any number over 30 indicates a vulnerability to stress. You are seriously vulnerable if your score is between 50 and 75 and extremely vulnerable if it is over 75.

A CHARGE TO PARENTS OF GIFTED CHILDREN

We bring this book to a close by presenting the challenging statements of Gina Ginsberg Riggs:*

Parents are Children's First Teachers

Parents are their children's first teachers and as such have the greatest and most lasting impact on their lives. They are first in line to offer values, shape attitudes, and dispense information. So, if you are the parent of a gifted child, take heart, rise to the challenge, and cross your fingers; your child may be our president one day, write a perfect symphony, find a cure for cancer, or improve the quality of our lives in whatever direction his or her gifts lead.

The hints which follow are the result of much trial and error, soul searching, and the fervent wish that somebody had given me this information when my own children were younger. They were probably my most valuable teachers and certainly, my most vocal and severest critics. My heart and thanks to to them for being their gifted selves and the free spirits they have become.

Twenty Helpful Hints

1. Gifted children are children first and gifted second. A five year old may be able to solve mathematical problems worth bragging about to the grandparents, but he has only lived five years, and only behavior reasonable for a five year old should be expected of him.

2. Enjoy! Of all the problems children have, giftedness is the best one. Your gifted child may try your stamina and endurance at times, but enthusiasm and lust for learning will more than make up for the pace. Your argumentative youngster may be practicing to become a great trial lawyer, and the artwork taped to your refrigerator may promise competition to Rembrandt in spite of the fact that you cannot tell which way is "up". Relax and enjoy the excitement.

3. Listen to your gifted child. Dinner may be about to burn and the telephone ringing, but listen because the question may be important and, if ignored, the curiosity to ask may disappear. The one thing we can all give our children is our undivided attention - at least, most of the time.

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*Gina Ginsberg Riggs has been and continues to be one of the nation's leaders in the field of the gifted. She is the founder and Executive Director of the Gifted Child Society, Inc., chairperson of the National Alliance of State Associations for the Gifted, author, consultant and dedicated parent.

4. Don't compare your gifted child to other children. It places on the gifted one the responsibility to be gifted all the time, and it certainly is not fair to whoever comes off second best. Every child is unique and special in some way. So--cool it.

5. It is a great big wonderful world. Show it to your gifted children in the form of trips, books, music, museums, fire stations, digs, interesting people, wriggly things, daisy chains, and the magical chemistry that makes a cake rise.

6. Let them specialize if they want to. You may not enjoy living with dinosaurs by the year, but there are fringe benefits. They could be learning to do research, keeping notes, knowing the Dewey Decimal System, and keeping some kind of order in that disaster area that passes for a room, after you learn that there are things more important than neatness.

7. Education is expensive. Start saving now.

8. Children don't have to be gainfully employed every waking minute. There should be time to daydream, do baby things, and to lie on an unmade bed and contemplate the ceiling. Gifted children are usually creative children, and it is hard to be creative on schedule.

9. Don't expect your gifted child to live up to your unfulfilled aspirations. You may dream of "my son or daughter, the doctor", but he or she may have other heroes.

10. Let them do for themselves what they say they can do, because they probably know. If the child's judgment is faulty, that is learning too. Gifted children are future leaders who thrive on early responsibility. Parents are the ones who have the problem of letting go.

11. Praise your gifted child because he or she needs all the encouragement available. Praise him or her for the wonderful things accomplished. If the great experiment does not work and the shaky tower of blocks comes tumbling down, praise the child for trying. Inquiring minds must take intellectual risks, and risk taking needs to be supported and praised. Constructive criticism, recognizing good effort, is a form of praise, too.

12. Discipline is necessary and comes in the same shape for all brothers and sisters, whether gifted, curley-headed, or slowpokes. Giftedness is no excuse for unacceptable behavior.

13. Recognize that there are times to reach out a helping hand, and that there are times to get out of the way. Knowing the difference makes you a very gifted parent.

14. You cannot expect your perceptive gifted child to develop a high sense of morality if you cheat on your income tax. Would George Washington lie?

15. Let your home be a place where knowledge is valued and the quest for learning respected.

16. Remember that the fine line between encouragement and pushing may make the difference between a happy and productive youngster and an unfulfilled, underachieving child.

17. Be a welcome person at your child's school. You cannot switch to the competition (another public school system) anyway--there isn't any. Support the school's effort to provide for your child's special learning needs and demonstrate your genuine interest in quality education for all children.

18. Give houseroom to books and magazines, give prime time at the dinner table for discussion of topics of interest by all members of the family, and give praise to all efforts in the pursuit of excellence.

19. Parents of gifted children are people too. They need help and guidance in understanding and appreciating the special needs of their children without feeling inferior or jealous. Hostile feelings could lead to over protection, domination, or exploitation of the child.

20. Don't expect your gifted child to be gifted all the time. That kind of halo makes for a very bad headache.

Remember, it is a privilege to be the parent of a gifted child. Most of the time it means a lot of fun, but sometimes the responsibility of helping your children become all they can become weighs heavily. I really don't think that you or I personally, can make the whole world a better place, but maybe one day our children will. We are fortunate parents indeed.

APPENDIX

A. P.A.G.E. (Parents for the Advancement of Gifted Education

B. The North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented

A

PARENTS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GIFTED EDUCATION

IN NORTH CAROLINA

Background Information:

PAGE is an organization of parents and all others who are vitally interested in the growth and education of Gifted and Talented students. The organization was formed by Dr. LeRoy Martin, Jr. in Raleigh, North Carolina in February, 1974, and established as PAGE of North Carolina, Inc. Since that time, over forty PAGE chapters or similar groups have become active throughout the state.

PAGE and the North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented work closely together and sponsor an annual state conference on gifted education. PAGE also holds an annual leadership conference for officers and contact persons of present and potential PAGE chapters.

A State PAGE Network has been established in order to serve as an information center for all chapters in relation to local, state, and national activities and trends in gifted education. The Network also provides assistance to any local group interested in forming a PAGE chapter. The State Coordinator is Dr. Don Russell, Professor Emeritus of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. For PAGE information of any kind, contact Dr. Russell at 900 Brintonial Way, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27104. Telephone: 919-768-7318

How to Organize a PAGE Chapter:

Form a nucleus of parents, teachers, and others who are interested in having a PAGE chapter in your area. This will constitute the initial Steering Committee and necessitates choosing a chairperson or possibly co-chairpersons.

At this point it is wise to seek assistance from the State PAGE Coordinator and/or experienced officers from other PAGE chapters.

At least two work sessions should be scheduled in order to formulate a set of proposed by-laws and prepare an initial slate of officers. Matters of dues, membership drive and possible activities should be discussed.

Next, schedule a highly publicized open meeting inviting parents, teachers, school administrators, school board members, community leaders and all others interested in gifted education. This meeting should feature a well-known expert in the field of gifted education who is capable of pointing up

functional goals for the chapter and engendering enthusiasm in behalf of gifted students. This meeting is a good time to distribute the proposed by-laws and possibly elect the initial slate of officers after first seeking additional nominations.

With the officers duly elected, committees can be established and leadership designated to serve the purpose of the chapter. Examples of functional committees are: School liaison, Legislative, Membership, Program, Finance, Projects, Newsletter, etc. It is important to use all people who are willing to serve.

Programs for regularly scheduled meetings should be vibrant and challenging. It is important to involve the local school administration, the teachers of the gifted, and gifted students. A list of suggested projects and activities is attached.

The major role of PAGE is that of strong advocacy - stressing to all educational and political leaders and the entire citizenry that investing in our greatest young minds is not only logical but mandatory in order to benefit the individual, the community, and American society.

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR PAGE CHAPTERS

Most of the activities listed below have at one time or another been carried out by various PAGE Chapters in North Carolina. They are suggestions offered as "food for thought" and challenge.

1. Saturday and/or after-school enrichment classes geared specifically to the interests and needs of gifted students.

2. Summer classes, camps, seminars, trips, etc. which go beyond what schools generally offer.

3. Establishment of a "mentor" program where gifted students can associate with and learn from community and regional leaders in such areas as politics, finance, communications, art, music, writing, industry, ecology, medicine, law, science, and any other realm of human endeavor where leadership and creativity may be nurtured.

4. Compilation of a catalog or directory of local and regional resources distinctly appropriate to gifted students.

5. A survey and description of special opportunities for gifted students in higher education, with attention to scholarship available.

6. A survey and description of opportunities for foreign study and travel, including a list of sponsoring agencies and possible financial assistance.

7. A survey and description of work-study programs offered for bright young people in business and industry.

8. A calendar of cultural events in the community and region.

9. A monthly PAGE Newsletter distributed to PAGE members and other appropriate community agencies and leaders, to include chapter notes, hints for parents, a student column, reading lists, coming events, etc.

10. Chapter sponsorship of workshops, seminars or small study groups on such topics as: Identifying Giftedness, Parenting the Gifted, Futurism, Brain Functioning, Legal and Legislative Issues, Quality Education, School Policies, Curriculum Theory, etc.

11. Effective public relations through press releases, TV, and radio programs, advertisements, etc. in behalf of PAGE and education of the gifted.

12. A carefully organized Speakers Bureau geared to addressing matters pertinent to the education of the gifted.

13. Establishment of a PAGE reading center in the school and/or public library with an accompanying book purchase fund.

14. A cooperative plan with the school administration to organize a corps of teacher aides or substitutes for G/T classes, Great Books courses, and other appropriate areas when needs are manifest.

15. Establishment of effective cooperative endeavors with the school counselors in areas of educational and occupational information.

16. Within chapter budgets, a plan for appropriate fund raising procedures for whatever purposes seem most functional and beneficial to the local G/T needs, such as (a) scholarships for gifted students for extended studies, travel, conference attendance or individual projects; (b) scholarships for G/T teachers to pursue advanced study, attendance at conferences and special workshops; (c) procurement of special materials and equipment for G/T teachers such as microcomputers, calculators, specimens, books, etc.

17. Careful planning and implementation of ways in which G/T teachers and school leaders may be recognized and rewarded for their work in behalf of gifted students.

18. Establishment of cooperative understandings and working relations with parent groups in other areas of exceptionality, such as mentally handicapped, learning disabled, speech, hearing, visual, emotional, orthopedic impairment, etc.

19. Establishment of functional working relations with local colleges and other educational agencies in such matters as special programs, common interests and causes, and use of facilities, etc.

20. Implementation of joint meetings with parent groups from private and parochial schools, including recruitment as PAGE members.

21. Co-sponsorship with local schools of student participation in "Olympics of the Mind."

22. Sponsorship of a "Great Ideas" fair where examples of G/T students' work are displayed, explained, and evaluated. Includes writings, art work and compositions in several media, significant computer programs, inventions, oral presentations of theoretical constructs, experiments in scientific, social, psychological realms etc.

23. Careful planning and implementation of an "Advocacy" program which tells the G/T story to those who represent the community and region in local, state, and federal government.

It is hoped that this list will serve as a standing request for additional suggestions. Please report any similar or different activities or projects to:

Dr. Don Russell, State Page Coordinator
900 Brintonial Way
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27104
Telephone: 919-768-7318

B

The North Carolina Association for the Gifted and Talented is an organization of professional educators, parents and concerned citizens committed to active academic, political and social leadership for the identification of gifted and talented students. The NCAGT is further committed to the development of a full range of educational services appropriate for the unique characteristics of the gifted. The NCAGT pursues its goals by working with the following . . .

THE PUBLIC AND NCAGT MEMBERSHIP

The NCAGT provides the membership with a newsletter and periodic support literature, and sponsors public meetings and media coverage concerning education for the gifted. The Board of the NCAGT provides a speakers bureau.

PARENTS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GIFTED EDUCATION

The NCAGT and PAGE sponsor the North Carolina Annual Gifted and Talented Conference and promote development of PAGE chapters in local communities.

THE OFFICES OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

The NCAGT is an advocate for the policies necessary to provide programs for gifted and talented students.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The NCAGT offers expertise and resources to assist in the review and implementation of state definitions, procedures and programs.

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

The NCAGT is an affiliate of The Association for the Gifted, a division of the Council for Exceptional Children, and the National Association for Gifted Children.

The NCAGT is EDUCATORS AND PARENTS working for the full development of gifted and talented students in order to help them realize their potential for self and society. Help us to achieve that objective by becoming a member of NCAGT.

For information and membership, contact:

Dr. Linda Weiss Morris, Pres. NCAGT
1756 Stonewood Drive
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27103

A PRACTICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following selection of materials is suggested as a practical bibliography of readings on various topics of interest to parents of gifted children. It is selective rather than comprehensive with an emphasis on clear, readable, and topical information.

Ainsworth-Land, V., and Fletcher, N. (1978) Making waves with creative problem-solving. Buffalo, New York: D.O.K. Publishers, Inc.

Activities for creative problem solving in eight easy steps. Appropriate for parents and small school groups.

Alvino, C. et al. (1985) Parents' guide to raising a gifted child. Little, Brown and Company, Boston.

This is a functional source for helping parents to recognize and to help develop a bright child's potential.

Bereiter, C., and Anderson, V. (1975) Thinking games book 2, New York: Scholastic Book Services.

This book is a compilation of games keyed to specific thinking skills. It would be useful for both parents and teachers because of its versatility.

Boston, B. (Ed.) (1975) Resource manual of information on gifted education. Reston, Virginia: Council for Exceptional Children.

This reference includes state, regional, and federal agencies involved in the education of the gifted and talented. A listing of films and a bibliography are included.

Clark, B. (1979) Growing up gifted. Columbus: Charles Merrill.

A comprehensive authoritative coverage of all aspects of giftedness. A solid background book for parents. It includes: examples of the home and school working together to build creativity, definitions and descriptions of programs, and materials on the very young gifted child.

Clements, S., et al. (1982) Do-it yourself critical & creative thinking. Phoenix, Arizona: Think Ink Publications, Resources for the Gifted, Inc.

An open-ended book of ideas which focuses on specific aspects of creative thinking. The ideas could easily be modified by parents for use with individual children.

Coffee, K. et al. (1976) Parentspeak on gifted and talented children. Ventura, California: National/State Leadership Training Institute, Office of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools.

Topics included in this publication are reasons for specialized education of gifted and talented, program promotion, and practical suggestions for organizing state and local groups.

Delp, J., and Martinson, R. (1975) The gifted and talented: A handbook for parents. Ventura, California: National/State Leadership Training Institute, Office of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools.

A guide for forming parent organizations is presented in this book. The identification process and the needs of gifted students are treated. Practical suggestions for parents are enumerated.

Eberle, R. (1971) Scamper, Games for imagination development. New York: D.O.K. Publishers, Inc.

Strategies and activities are presented to use with young children to strengthen imagination. The activities are fun and use simple and use everyday props.

Edwards, B. (1979) Drawing on the right side of the brain: A course in enhancing creativity and artistic confidence. Los Angeles, CA: J.P. Tarcher, Inc.

This book is for parents, teachers and youth who are interested in learning to be more artistically creative. Twelve lessons are presented with examples, exercises and critiques which improve creativity in the visual arts.

Ehrlich, V. (1982) Gifted children: A guide for parents and teachers. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Covering all general areas of parental concerns this book is especially strong in giving resources and practical ways for parents to work within the school setting.

Felker, R. (Ed. (1982) A parent's guide to the education of preschool gifted children. Washington, D.C.: National Association of State Boards of Education.

The 87 page booklet presents information to help parents raise their gifted and/or creative preschool children. Presented are descriptions of the needs of gifted children, suggested ways in which parents can act as advocates, issues in gifted education, overview of current social and cultural changes, and discussions of the implications for raising gifted children in this culture.

Fehrle, C. et al. (1982) The most-asked questions about gifted children: Answers for parents and educators. Columbia, MO.: Missouri University Press.

Six major categories--definitions of giftedness, ways to help parents identify gifted children, schooling for the gifted child, understanding gifted children, help for the gifted child, and discipline--are discussed in this 36 page booklet.

Flowers, J. (1982) Raising your gifted child. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.

Types of giftedness, the education of the gifted child, the underachieving gifted child, creativity, and mental health concerns are addressed, and a guide of resources is presented.

French, J. (Ed.) (1964) Educating the gifted: A book of readings. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

This survey of literature in gifted education includes such topics as identification, administrative programming arrangements, guidance, creativity, and underachievement.

G/T.C (Gifted/Creative/Talented Children). G/C/T Publishing Co., Box 6448, Mobile, AL 366606-0448.

Advertised as the "world's most popular magazine for parents and teacher of gifted, creative and talented children" this periodical provides a variety of ideas and articles of interest on a bimonthly basis.

Gallagher, J. (1975) Teaching the gifted child. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Characteristics, identification, program planning, and modification of the subject matter areas of language arts, science, mathematics, and social studies are explored. Productive thinking, creativity, and the nature and needs of the culturally different gifted and underachieving gifted are also incorporated.

Ginsberg, G. and Harrison, C. (1977) How to help your gifted child. A handbook for parents and teachers. New York: Monarch.

Historical development and current activities in the area of gifted education are presented. Practical strategies for implementing out-of-school programs are suggested.

Gowan, J., Khatena, J. and Torrance, E. (Eds.) (1979) Educating the ablest: A book of readings. 2nd ed. Itasco, IL: F.E. Peacock.

This book of readings focuses on the history of gifted education, curriculum, guidance, characteristics, women, identification, and teachers and teacher training. In addition, there are several chapters on creativity and the creative process.

Hall, E., and Skinner, S. (1980) Somewhere to turn: Strategies for parents of the gifted and talented. New York: Teachers College Press.

This book contains ideas for preschool as well as school age children. The major articles include information on motivation, advocacy groups, obtaining scholarships, materials for home use, and an "everyman's" guide to educational jargon.

Hopkins, L., and Shapiro, A. (1969) Creative activities for the gifted child. Belmont, California: Rearon-Pitman.

Enrichment ideas in art, science, math, music, physical education, and language arts are presented to assist parents with gifted children.

Kanigher, H. (1977) Everyday enrichment for gifted children at home and school. Ventura, California: National/State Leadership Training Institute, Office of the Ventura County Superintendent of Schools.

A variety of enrichment ideas for parents and teachers of the gifted is presented for all the major curricula areas.

Kaufman, F. (1976) Your gifted child and you. Reston, Virginia: Council for Exceptional Children.

Practical suggestions for parents to develop creativity and help their gifted child develop interests are the major focus. Suggestions for developing parent organizations and a national list of parent organizations for the gifted are included.

Krueger, M. (1978) On being gifted. New York: Walker and Company.

The book is a compilation of statements by gifted students on their perceptions of the world in which they live. Remarks focus on self, family, school, important persons in their lives, and their futures.

Miler, B. and Price, M. (Eds.) (1981) The gifted child, the family, and the community. New York: Walker.

This book is a compilation of essays on the home, school, and community as they influence the gifted child.

Parent guide to resources for the gifted. (1981) Phoenix, Arizona: Resources for the Gifted.

This handbook answers the most often asked questions of parents of the gifted. Done in a humorous style, it includes a section on resources for purchase.

Parker, M. et al. (May-June 1980) "Parenting the gifted adolescent," The Roeper Review, p. 40-42.

The article discusses difficulties in parenting gifted adolescents whose development may be strikingly uneven. Research is cited regarding fostering self confidence, task persistence, goal direction and the acquisition of a positive self-concept.

Perino, S. and Perino, J. (1981) Parenting the gifted: Developing the promise. New York: R.R. Bowker, Co.

A comprehensive "beginning" book for parents. It includes a strong section on advocacy, a glossary of educational jargon, and a helpful bibliography done by levels of parental knowledge.

Renzulli, J. (1977) The enrichment triad model: A guide for developing defensible programs for the gifted and talented. Mansfield Center, Connecticut: Creative Learning Press.

Included are various approaches to enrichment, instruments for identifying students' interests, techniques for identifying community resources, and a list of enrichment activities particularly suitable for the gifted.

Spellman, L. (1982) Creative investigations, Santa Clara, CA.: The Learning Works, Inc.

This workbook of activities is centered around six major content areas. It would be useful for independent projects for young gifted children.